



AzMERIT

Arizona's Statewide Achievement Assessment for
English Language Arts and Mathematics

AzMERIT Annotated Writing Samples Grade 9

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INTRODUCTION

The AzMERIT ELA test will have a Writing part and a Reading Part 1 and Part 2 for all grade levels. The structure of the sample AzMERIT writing test is similar to the actual AzMERIT writing test. Each writing test will have one or more passages that relate to a prompt. Students will create a written response to the prompt. Students will not answer comprehension questions about the prompt. Scratch paper is permitted on both the computer-based tests (CBT) and paper-based tests (PBT) writing tests in order for students to compose a rough draft prior to formulating a “final” copy in the paper booklet or in the word processing area on the computer.

CBT— On the CBT writing tests students will have access to one or more passages that relate to a prompt, an electronic version of the Writing Guide and a word processing area to type their “final” response.

PBT— On the PBT the students will have access to one or more passages that relate to a prompt, a print copy of the Writing Guide and a “final” copy area to write their response. On paper, the Writing Guide will also appear after the writing prompt and before the final copy area on the PBT. On the PBT, there will be three final copy pages with a line spacing of .375” for grades 3 and 4 (wide ruled) and .3” for grades 5–11 (college ruled).

Students are required to read passages associated with a topic then write a response based on a prompt. This type of text-based response requires students to use evidence from the passages as support for their ideas. This guide provides sample student responses which were scored using the AzMERIT Writing Rubric. Each essay has annotations which explain the reasoning for the score the paper received as well as a description of the task and additional notes about scoring. Examples of student responses represent some of the various combinations of the score points across the scoring domains. As a basis for developing a common understanding of the scoring criteria, an annotation follows the response to explain the prominent characteristics of the response described in the rubric. These responses are not intended to provide a full spectrum of examples for each score point in each domain. Moreover, they do not necessarily represent the highest or lowest example of each score point in each domain.

For more information on the writing guides available to students and the rubrics used to score writing responses on AzMERIT visit the AzMERIT website under “Writing Resources” [HERE](#).

To view the Grade 9 prompt and passage set [“Does the Electoral College Work?”](#) [CLICK HERE](#).

ARGUMENTATIVE TEXT-BASED WRITING RUBRIC

Argumentative Essay Writing Rubric (Grades 6–11)

Score	4	3	2	1
Purpose, Focus, and Organization	<p>The response is fully sustained and consistently focused within the purpose, audience, and task; and it has a clear claim and effective organizational structure creating coherence and completeness. The response includes most of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strongly maintained claim with little or no loosely related material Clearly addressed alternate or opposing claims¹ Skillful use of a variety of transitional strategies to clarify the relationships between and among ideas Logical progression of ideas from beginning to end with a satisfying introduction and conclusion Appropriate style and tone established and maintained 	<p>The response is adequately sustained and generally focused within the purpose, audience, and task; and it has a clear claim and evident organizational structure with a sense of completeness. The response includes most of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintained claim, though some loosely related material may be present Alternate or opposing claims included but may not be completely addressed¹ Adequate use of a variety of transitional strategies to clarify the relationships between and among ideas Adequate progression of ideas from beginning to end with a sufficient introduction and conclusion Appropriate style and tone established 	<p>The response is somewhat sustained within the purpose, audience, and task but may include loosely related or extraneous material; and it may have a claim with an inconsistent organizational structure. The response may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focused claim but insufficiently sustained or unclear Insufficiently addressed alternate or opposing claims¹ Inconsistent use of transitional strategies with little variety Uneven progression of ideas from beginning to end with an inadequate introduction or conclusion 	<p>The response is related to the topic but may demonstrate little or no awareness of the purpose, audience, and task; and it may have no discernible claim and little or no discernible organizational structure. The response may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absent, confusing, or ambiguous claim Missing alternate or opposing claims¹ Few or no transitional strategies Frequent extraneous ideas that impede understanding Too brief to demonstrate knowledge of focus or organization

¹Not applicable to Grade 6

*To receive a score in all categories the response must be in English, of a sufficient length, and address the prompt.

[UPDATED SEPTEMBER 2015]

Argumentative Essay Writing Rubric (Grades 6–11)

Score	4	3	2	1
Evidence and Elaboration	<p>The response provides thorough, convincing, and credible support, citing evidence for the writer’s claim that includes the effective use of sources, facts, and details. The response includes most of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smoothly integrated, thorough, and relevant evidence, including precise references to sources • Effective use of a variety of elaborative techniques to support the claim, demonstrating an understanding of the topic and text • Clear and effective expression of ideas, using precise language • Academic and domain-specific vocabulary clearly appropriate for the audience and purpose • Varied sentence structure, demonstrating language facility 	<p>The response provides adequate support, citing evidence for the writer’s claim that includes the use of sources, facts, and details. The response includes most of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally integrated and relevant evidence from sources, though references may be general or imprecise • Adequate use of some elaborative techniques • Adequate expression of ideas, employing a mix of precise and general language • Domain-specific vocabulary generally appropriate for the audience and purpose • Some variation in sentence structure 	<p>The response provides uneven, cursory support/evidence for the writer’s claim that includes partial use of sources, facts, and details. The response may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weakly integrated evidence from sources; erratic or irrelevant references or citations • Repetitive or ineffective use of elaborative techniques • Imprecise or simplistic expression of ideas • Some use of inappropriate domain-specific vocabulary • Most sentences limited to simple constructions 	<p>The response provides minimal support/evidence for the writer’s claim, including little if any use of sources, facts, and details. The response may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal, absent, erroneous, or irrelevant evidence or citations from the source material • Expression of ideas that is vague, unclear, or confusing • Limited and often inappropriate language or domain-specific vocabulary • Sentences limited to simple constructions
Conventions	<p>N/A (2-point rubric begins at score point 2)</p>	<p>The response demonstrates an adequate command of basic conventions. The response may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some minor errors in usage but no patterns of errors • Adequate use of punctuation, capitalization, sentence formation, and spelling 	<p>The response demonstrates a partial command of basic conventions. The response may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various errors in usage • Inconsistent use of correct punctuation, capitalization, sentence formation, and spelling 	<p>The response demonstrates a lack of command of conventions, with frequent and severe errors often obscuring meaning.</p>
Score	N/A	2	1	0

*To receive a score in all categories the response must be in English, of a sufficient length, and address the prompt.

Being a person of politics yourself, you of all people should know that many compromises have been made over the course of the establishment of the United States. However, some of the compromises, like the electoral college, were made because of factors in the past and are now not needed in today's modern democracy. While the electoral college once worked as a compromise in the past, it is an archaic system that unfairly represents the votes of citizens all across the nation. A popular vote should instead be utilized to fairly choose the people of power in this country and would better represent voters' opinions.

In implementing the electoral college, most states' votes either go to one candidate or the other, leading to candidates to only campaign in swing states (Bradford Plumer 13). This may not seem like much of a problem, but consider this: a swing state such as Florida with over 20 electoral votes could go to a candidate who could have won by a 51 to 49 percent margin. This means that all the voters who voted for the other candidate no longer count, making the electoral college ineffective at voicing the opinions of the populous. Also, many states may not even see the future president at all, like in the 2000 election where the candidates did not even go once and talk in seventeen states. This leads to a poor democracy because voters in these states will surmise that if the president will not bother to visit their state, they shouldn't bother on making an educated decision when voting, or may choose to not vote at all. In an election by popular vote, presidents will have to make greater strides in getting the people's votes and citizens will then have more of an impetus in learning more about their country's government and politics.

With the Electoral College, there is also the risk that electors may not necessarily vote for the candidate the people want as president. In the Electoral College, "voters vote not for the president, but for a slate of electors, who in turn elect the president" (Bradford 10). These electors may not necessarily vote for what candidate voters want most as president, and could do what they might feel is the best decision; however, this is not always what the majority of voters want in a president and could end up with a poor president. In addition, most voters know very little about how these electors are chosen and are not in control of who their state's electors are. In a way this system is a bit corrupt, because the voters don't have the final say of the president.

In addition, a tie is likely in an electoral vote because of swing states, which has the potential to lead to a disaster. If two candidates receive the same number of electoral votes and tie in an election, the House of Representatives then chooses the president, while the Senate choose the vice president, but their votes may not show who voters want as president, seeing that voters often vote one party for

president while the other for their representatives (Plumer 12). The vote for president is distributed unevenly, and states with many voters will only be represented by one vote. this could lead to the House of Representatives choosing a president that is only liked by a small population and this cannot easily be undone. Swing states are the only thing that can cause or prevent a tie in elections, and a tie has almost ocured in 1976 in Hawaii and in 1968 in Ohio.

Those in favor of the electoral college argue that because candidates will focus on swing states in order to win voters in those states will pay closer attention to the election and make a more educated decision (Richard A. Posner 20). However, this is not necessarily the case, and there are plenty of other well-educated voters in other states who have opinions that will never be counted because of the electoral college. If the popular vote becomes the new method in choosing the president, voters all across the nation will pay more attention to elections because they feel that their vote can make a difference, and it will. This will in turn increase the number of voters actively paying attention to their country's decisions. Because of the Electoral College, "about one-half the eligible American population did vote in [2012's] election" (Posner 23). Although this number is mentioned as a success in Posner's arguement, this means that there is *one-half* of American voices left unheard. Democracy only works if all citizens vote, but they will only take the time to vote if they know that they can make a difference.

Change needs to happen and it has to soon. If not, a poor president could be elected and then who knows what bad things could happen? With the popular vote, more people will be heard, and they will better take part in their country's government, leading to a better nation.

4–Purpose, Focus, and Organization

The response is fully sustained and consistently focused within the purpose and task. A clear claim is presented in the introduction (*A popular vote should instead be utilized to fairly choose the people of power in this country and would better represent voters' opinions*) and strongly maintained throughout the response. The introduction is concise and effective in providing the historical context for the adoption of the Electoral College then stating the argument that these circumstances have changed and the need for the Electoral College process no longer exists. An effective organizational structure creates coherence and a sense of completeness. The response logically progresses through each distinct argument against the Electoral College in the first three body paragraphs. A variety of transitions are skillfully used to clarify relationships between and among ideas (*This may not seem like much of a problem, but; This leads to a; In addition*). Opposing claims are clearly and effectively addressed in the last body paragraph of the response. An adequate conclusion concisely closes the response by reiterating the impacts of replacing the Electoral College with a popular vote (*more people will be heard, and they will better take part in their country's government, leading to a better nation*). Appropriate style and tone are established and maintained throughout the response.

4–Evidence and Elaboration

The response includes thorough, convincing, and credible evidence selected from the source materials to support the claim. Multiple source-based examples are provided and properly cited for many of the points (*a swing state such as Florida with over 20 electoral votes could go to a candidate who could have won by a 51 to 49 percent margin*). Evidence is smoothly integrated with the analysis of the impact the evidence has on points made and the significance it has to the overall claim (*This leads to a poor democracy because voters in these states will surmise that if the president will not bother to visit their state, they shouldn't bother on making an educated decision when voting, or may choose to not vote at all*). The response demonstrates excellent facility with language, including varied sentence structure, clear expression of ideas, and academic, domain-specific vocabulary (*In a election by popular vote, presidents will have to make greater strides in getting the people's votes and citizens will then have more of an impetus in learning more about their country's government and politics*).

2–Conventions

The draft response demonstrates an adequate command of basic conventions.

Though I have not been alive to see most of it, I am sure that the debate on keeping the Electoral College or changing to election by popular vote has been going on for ages. Now, the words of a fourteen year old might not mean much to a state senator, especially since it will be four years until I am legally allowed to vote, but please sir, hear me out. I believe that we should keep the Electoral College for many reasons. One, if the president was decided by popular vote, our president might not be the best one for the country. Secondly, if it were up to a popular vote, the president might win, or not win, simply for being a regional favorite.

To start this off, if our president was decided by a popular vote, our president might not be the best thing for our country. As stated in the third article, paragraph 20, "The winner-take-all method of awarding electoral votes induces the candidates... to focus their campaign efforts on the toss-up states." As you know, toss-up state's make the final vote. Therefore, people in these states are more likely to pay close attention to the campaign, and they will be the ones with the most information. If it were up to popular vote, then anyone over the age of 18 could randomly pick a winner. Let's be honest, the majority of eighteen year old's will vote on whoever their friends or family vote for, or even the candidate representing their group (Democratic or Republic). Many people, if the president was decided by popular vote, would make an uneducated decision on one of the candidates, not studying their choices as much as one would with the Electoral College system in place.

Secondly, if it were up to a popular vote, the president might simply win because he (or she) is a regional favorite. As stated in the third article, paragraph 19, "...because a candidate with only regional appeal is unlikely to be a successful president." Also in the paragraph, it states that no region has enough electoral votes to elect a president. If the president was decided by popular vote, however, can you imagine what it would be like? Take Romney, for example. He was a solid regional favorite in the South. Romney knew that there was no incentive to campaign heavily in the South, because he would not gain any electoral votes by increasing his plurilaty in states he knew he would win. If popularity decided the president, residents of the other regions might feel like their vote would not count, and that the president would have no regard for their interests. Say that popularity did actually determine a winner. While most regions might vote for a certain presidents, the ones that did not would feel like that the man running the country wasnt really "their president". However, Mr. Senator, if the Electoral College was to stay, this problem would never exist. With the system we have now, the people vote for your state's electors when they vote for the president. Most states also have a "winner-take-all" system. Therefore, the candidate with the most votes in a state win's that state's electors. This lets the voting be even, fair. A popular vote would make the voting unfair to those who did not want that president.

Now, of course, the other view has to be addressed. As stated in the second article, "Because of the winner-take-all system in each state, candidates don't spend time in states they know they have no chance of winning... During the 2000 campaign, seventeen states didn't see the candidates at all." This quote shows that the candidates might not go to a state they know they have no chance in winning. I can see how this could support changing to election by popular vote, and how it could be reasonable. If our president was chosen by popular vote, then he would visit all of the states, trying to win them over. However, there are some strong arguments against this. To begin with, one man would have to visit 50 states, and even if he only visited the majority, there is still a possibility that the state will not vote for him anyways, in the end. If we keep the Electoral College, then the majority of votes in a state would count, not his popularity. As a fourteen year old, I can relate this to highschool. A student can be the most popular student in the school, but they can also be the most rude and mean. And while another student may not be popular, they can be the nicest in the school. If the president was chosen by a popular vote, he might just end up being the worst thing that could happen to the country.

In conclusion, Mr. State Senator, I think that keeping the Electoral College is the best thing for our country. If we changed to election by popular vote, the man (or woman) might not be the best for our country, and the best man might not win because he is not a regional favorite. I hope, sir, that you will take my letter into account when you go to vote on this topic.

4–Purpose, Focus, and Organization

The response is fully sustained and consistently focused within the purpose and task. The response includes a clear claim and strongly maintains that claim throughout the response (*I believe that we should keep the Electoral College for many reasons*). The introduction personalizes the issue, acknowledging inexperience with the electoral process while recognizing the audience (*Now, the words of a fourteen year old might not mean much to a state senator, especially since it will be four years until I am legally allowed to vote*). A preview of points is provided in the introduction, and this plan is implemented through a logical progression of ideas from beginning to end. External transitions are formulaic but functional (*To start this off, Secondly*). Internal transitions are used effectively to clarify the relationships between and among ideas (*Therefore, As you know, Let's be honest*). Opposing claims are clearly and thoroughly addressed in the third body paragraph, including an example illustrating the principle's application to high school popularity (*A student can be the most popular student in the school, but they can also be the most rude and mean*). The conclusion adequately reiterates the claim and points made. Appropriate style and tone are established and maintained throughout the response.

4–Evidence and Elaboration

The response provides thorough, convincing, and credible support, citing evidence for the claim that includes the effective use of sources. The response includes the effective use of a variety of sources to support the claim. This evidence is smoothly and effectively integrated throughout, including using examples taken from personal experiences (*Let's be honest, the majority of eighteen year old's will vote on whoever their friends or family vote for, or even the candidate representing their group*). Relating these principles to personal experiences demonstrates an understanding of topic and text. The response demonstrates excellent facility with language, with varied sentence structure, clear expression of ideas, and academic, domain-specific vocabulary (*He was a solid regional favorite in the South. Romney knew that there was no incentive to campaign heavily in the South, because he would not gain any electoral votes by increasing his plurilaty in states he knew he would win. If popularity decided the president, residents of the other regions might feel like their vote would not count, and that the president would have no regard for their interests*).

2–Conventions

The draft response demonstrates an adequate command of basic conventions.

“Abolish the electoral college!” is a famous statement that was made by Bob Dole on whether or not it would be a good idea to keep the electoral college. Though others may disagree and say that our founding fathers established the Electoral College. Also that it was established with the mindset of helping the American people, but I would like to think otherwise. I believe that we should change the system by which we vote the president of the United States into election by popular vote. For many years we have been using the concept of the Electoral College and for many years, it has led to unfair calls and the placing of bad leadership in our country. In the article titled, “The Indefensible Electoral College: Why even the best-laid defenses of the system are wrong”, the author defines what the electoral college system really is, the author states, “Under the electoral college system, voters vote not for the president, but for a slate of electors, who in turn elect the president.” This system is an unfair system, and cannot be trusted. It is time for change.

The electoral college is a dishonesty to voters, it is an unfair system. In “The Indefensible Electoral College: Why even the best-laid defenses of the system are wrong”, the author makes a good claim. He or she talks about the winner takes all system that is affiliated with the electoral college. In the 13th paragraph the author specifically says, “Because of the winner-take-all system in each state, candidates don’t spend time in states they know have no chance of winning, focusing only on the tight races “swing” state.” That shows how unfair it is to us as the American people. Certain states may not get a chance to see who their choices are. They are forced to make a decision based on the little we know and the majority of the knowledge comes from the media which is a very unreliable source. “During the 2000 campaign, seventeen states didn’t see the candidates at all.” That shows how little our voices are heard in a decision that is crucial for how we go about and make decisions in our everyday lives. We the American people have to rely on states such as Ohio for who our president will be.

There is dishonesty everywhere you go. More so in the electoral college. When the electors are chosen we have no say so. The state legislatures are the ones responsible for picking the electors. In paragraph 11 of “The Indefensible Electoral College”, the author makes a remark that everyone should put into regards. It says “That those electors could always defy the will of the people.” Just like people can lie about their age, electors can also fib about their position or party in which they are representing. The author also mentions in paragraph 11, “In the same vein, “faithless” electors have occasionally refused to vote for their party’s candidate and cast a deciding vote for whomever they please.” Not everyone can be trusted, and the dishonesty is another reason why we should do away with the electoral college and change to election by popular vote. With the election by popular, we are assured that there is fair play even though some of us may not get our voice heard completely.

Student-3

Score Point 3/3/1

(page 2 of 3)

People who are for the concept of the electoral college may argue other wise. For instance, in the article called, "In Defense of the Electoral College", the author argues that " The Electoral College despite its lack of democratic pedigree; all are practical reasons, not liberal or conservative reasons", meaning it's idea of support. I believe the Electoral College is an overrated nor practical.

I am in favor of abolishing the electoral collage amd changing to election of by popular vote. With the system of election of popular vote, you will be sure that the system is fair,honest, and speakes the voices of the American people. As a sentor you should take the best interest of the American people to heart.

3–Purpose, Focus, and Organization

The response is adequately sustained and generally focused within the purpose, audience, and task. The response includes a clear claim (*we should change the system by which we vote the president of the United States into election by popular vote*), and that claim is maintained throughout the response. Generalities about the negative results the country has endured as a result of the Electoral College and the Electoral College process are also appropriately placed in the introduction (*unfair calls and the placing of bad leadership in our country*). The theme of dishonesty and unfairness identified in the introduction is broken into two distinct points in the two body paragraphs. An adequate progression of ideas within each of these paragraphs is apparent, with each sentence building on the previous one. An attempt to identify opposing claims is made in the introduction and the last body paragraph but is not adequately developed (*People who are for the concept of the electoral college may argue other wise*). Appropriate style and tone are established. The conclusion is minimally adequate, succinctly reiterating the claim, touching on each of the points, and invoking the audience to *take the best interest of the American people to heart*.

3–Evidence and Elaboration

The response provides adequate support, citing evidence for the claim using information contained in the source materials. Relevant evidence from multiple sources is generally integrated. For example, in the first body paragraph the response explains why the winner-take-all system results in unfairness to some voters (*“candidates don’t spend time in states they know have no chance of winning, focusing only on the tight races “swing” state”*). The response adequately integrates this source-derived information by stepping through the cause and effect: voters in these states are forced to make a decision on little and unreliable information, this is a crucial decision, and it’s unfair that some states like Ohio are left to make the decision for everyone. A mix of precise and general language and appropriate domain-specific vocabulary is used with some variation in sentence structure.

1–Conventions

Conventions errors are present, including usage, spelling (*collage, desion, crutial*), capitalization, and punctuation. The writing in this draft response demonstrates a partial command of basic conventions.

The Electoral College is a process that selects the electors to vote for the President and Vice President of the United States. It consists of 538 electors and a majority of 270 votes is required to elect the president. The Electoral College is held every four years on the Tuesday after the first Monday of November. In defense of the Electoral College, it is a right and just system that keeps the votes of states fair for choosing the President.

It can be a complicated system of processes, but the Electoral College is used to make the agreement of choosing the President accurately. Voters vote not for the President, but for the state of electors who in turn elect for the President. The state of electors are trusted to vote for the party's nominee, according to Richard A. Posner who wrote an excerpt from "In Defense of the Electoral College: Five reasons to keep our despised method of choosing the President" from *Slate Magazine*. The Electoral College balances the weight of votes between large and small states by population. This avoids large states to get all the attention when it comes to choosing a president because they have more people than a smaller state with less people.

From a different point of view, the Electoral college can be unfair toward some citizens who just want to make their own decisions and not vote of the electors. "Voters cannot always control whom their electors vote for", stated by Bradford Plumer who wrote an excerpt from "The Indefensible Electoral College: Why even the best-laid defenses are wrong" from *Mother Jones*. The winner-take-all system in each state awards all electors to the winning presidential candidate, which can be seen as unfair to voters. For example, during the 2000 campaign, seventeen states didn't see the candidates at all, including Rhode Island and South Carolina, and voters in 25 of the largest media markets didn't get to see a single campaign ad. In favor of those who find the Electoral College an unfair system, it could use a little work around the edges.

The Electoral College is still a successful system despite their tough years in the United States. In some cases the system can be fair in some ways toward some parts of the country. The Electoral College requires a presidential candidate to have a trans-regional appeal. No region has enough electoral votes to elect a president. So a solid regional favorite, such as Romney was in the South, has no incentive to campaign heavily in those states, for he gains no electoral votes by increasing his plurality in states that he knows he will win, according to Richard A. Posner. This is a desirable result because a candidate with only regional appeal is unlikely to be a successful president. So, in some ways the Electoral College continues to be just in some situations involving regions around the United States.

Student-4

Score Point 3/2/2

(page 2 of 3)

All in all, the Electoral college system is a fair and just system that helps our nation pick a responsible and trustworthy President. The process consists of selecting the electors and the meeting of the electors where they vote for the President and Vice President of the United States. In a way, the system can be an unjust toward some countries or situations depending, but the government should continue to use this system and perhaps work along the edges of this process in order to perfect its justifications.

3–Purpose, Focus, and Organization

The response is adequately sustained and generally focused within the purpose, audience, and task. A clear claim is identified and maintained throughout (*In defense of the Electoral College, it is a right and just system that keeps the votes of states fair for choosing the President*). An adequate progression of ideas from beginning to end is present. An evident organizational structure is used to proceed from explaining the Electoral College process in body paragraph one (*It can be a complicated system of processes*) to identifying arguments against the Electoral College in the second body paragraph to weighing those disadvantages against the value of cross-regional appeal in the third body paragraph. Each of these ideas is introduced with an external transition bridging these concepts (*The Electoral College is still a successful system despite their tough years in the United States*). Internal transitions are also used to clarify relationships between and among ideas (*So a solid regional favorite; This is a desirable result because; So, in some ways*). The conclusion sufficiently summarizes ideas without unnecessary repetition. Appropriate objective and academic style and tone are established.

2–Evidence and Elaboration

The response provides cursory and uneven support for the claim, including partial use of source material. The first body paragraph describes the Electoral College process followed by a citation to the Posner source but then focuses on only one issue from the source (*balances the weight of votes between large and small states by population*). Multiple counterclaims are listed in the second body paragraph, citing source material and providing source-derived examples (*For example, during the 2000 campaign, seventeen states didn't see the candidates at all*). However, these opposing arguments are not adequately addressed (*it could use a little work around the edges*). Other than the reference in the first body paragraph to the Electoral College's benefit for smaller states, the only argument in favor of keeping the Electoral College—the actual claim—is made in the third body paragraph (*still a successful system despite their tough years*). A source is cited (*a solid regional favorite . . . knows he will win, according to Richard A. Posner*), but this information is not adequately integrated with an explanation as to why this would result in a more successful president. Although some support is provided with citation to the source material, the quality and integration of support is inadequate.

2–Conventions

Although a few minor spelling errors are present (*electo, descisions, Rohde*) in this draft response, the writing reflects an adequate command of basic conventions.

Dear, state senator I think we should change to election by popular vote for the president of the United States. I think this because the Electoral College does not seem fair, the president that usually wins in popular vote loses to the vote for presidency, it is considered a non-democratic method for selecting a president, and it is all up to the electors of a candidate. The Electoral College should also be changed to popular vote because it is not the people who are choosing the president, it is the three electors sent from each different state.

The Electoral College should be changed to election by popular vote, because it is not fair to the candidates. This is because most presidents that win the popular vote section of the election then end up losing the presidential vote section, an example of this is when candidate Al Gore recieved the most individual votes when running against George W. Bush, but Bush won the electoral section, recieving two hundred and seventy-one against Al Gore's two hundred and sixty-six. The Electoral college is also unfair to voters, because of all of the states winner take-all system of government, and in seventeen states they did not get a chance to see the candidates. Most people believe the Electoral College is outdated and irrational, a person named Bob Dole, believes that the Electoral College should be completely abolished. Another big problem in the Electoral College is segregationists who do everything to go against certain parties and their candidates, like the time in 1960 a group of segregationists almost succeeded in their effort to get rid of all democratic electors so that new electors would be opposed to John F. Kennedy.

The Electoral College should also be changed to election by popular vote, because people consider it non-democratic. This is because the voting is all up to the electors selected by each of the different states, meaning that the actual people of the state have no power in the election of the candidates for president. When the people of the state take their vote for the candidates they are actually voting for potential electors who will then go represent the selected candidate, this gives rise to problems like corrupt electors who are dishonest and using cheating tactics, also most states know that their votes will do nothing to help the candidates being represented, examples would be the Democrats in Texas and the Republicans in California. It is also believed that the Electoral College makes potential voters not want to vote at all and they end up not representing their candidates. And most people already have a certainty of the outcome of the election, meaning they already know who will win the election based on the number of votes so far in the popular votes section and the electoral section. The system of electors is also not fair because the people can not control who they are voting for has the electors, and the states number of electors are equal to the number of people on its congressional delegation, which gives big states an advantage over small states.

Student-5

Score Point 2/2/2

(page 2 of 3)

To conclude this letter, I again say that the Electoral College should be changed to election by popular vote because, popular vote is fairer then the Electoral College, the people have no power compared to the electors and the are subject to corruption with in the system.

2–Purpose, Focus, and Organization

The response is somewhat sustained within the purpose and task, establishing a claim in the introduction (*I think we should change to election by popular vote*) with a few reasons to support that claim. Although the response remains focused and consistent with regard to the claim, there is little organizational structure. Other than an explanation in the second body paragraph about how the Electoral College works, there is no apparent reason for the order in which the arguments are provided. Arguments are merely listed, with minimal transitions to assist understanding. Repetitive external transitions begin each body paragraph (*The Electoral College should also be changed to election by popular vote, because*). Alternate claims or counterclaims are not identified or addressed. Much like the introduction, the conclusion merely reiterates the claim and lists a few of the multiple reasons provided in the body of the response.

2–Evidence and Elaboration

The response provides cursory support for the claim that includes partial use of source materials. The response includes multiple references to information contained in the source material without citation or attribution. Information provided to support the claim is merely listed without adequate development. A few of the references, such as the number of electors from each state (*three electors sent from each different state*), and the claim that most presidents that win the popular vote also lose the election in the Electoral College (*most presidents that win the popular vote section of the election then end up losing the presidential vote section*) are misunderstandings of the source material.

2–Conventions

Although a few minor errors are present, this draft response reflects an adequate command of basic conventions.

Dear State Senator, I am writing to inform you, that we need to change the fact that we have Electoral colleges and go to a popularity vote for presidency. I feel that more people would vote if they knew that their vote actually made a difference. Instead of no one caring because of the winner takes all rule.

If the United States was to go to a popularity vote this would push millions of people to get up, out and vote because they know what they are doing is going to make a difference. According to Plumer "...over 60% of voters would prefer a direct election to the kind we have now." The fact is that voters can't always control whom their electors vote for. We don't want another 2000 fiasco on our hands again, since electors can directly defy the right of the people. Electoral colleges are unfair, outdated, and irrational due to this fact by itself.

The Electoral colleges are non-democratic in a way that when you vote for a presidential candidate you're really voting for a slate of electors. That slate of electors could vote directly against what you voted for and not lose a minute of sleep over it. According to Posner, "Romney was in the South, has no incentive to campaign heavily in those states, for he gains no electoral votes.... the residence of the regions .. feel as if their votes don't count.. really isn't their president." By this the people meant that since the candidate doesn't campaign there they feel as if they are disenfranchised.

For these reasons I think we should go to a Popularity vote for presidency in the United States. I think it would make people feel more appreciated and more people would vote. This would also bring up the votes in total that would be cast.

2–Purpose, Focus, and Organization

The response is somewhat sustained within the purpose and task. A claim is stated in the introduction (*we need to change the fact that we have Ellectoral colleges and go to a popularity vote for presidency*) but is insufficiently sustained. The response contains little variety in transitional strategies to clarify the relationships between and among ideas. A topic sentence is used to identify the point made in each body paragraph, and the contents of each paragraph include loosely related ideas. The introduction and conclusion add little to the response, merely stating the claim and repeating the same point in the conclusion. No alternate claims or counterclaims are identified or addressed.

2–Evidence and Elaboration

Although the response does include support from the source material, the information is weakly integrated and does not support the point for which it is cited. While supporting the overall claim that a popular vote would be superior to the Electoral College, the information used in the second body paragraph to support the idea (*slate of electors could vote directly against what you voted for and not lose a minute of sleep over it*) does not relate to the controlling idea (*“Romney was in the South, has no incentive t campaign heavily in those states, for he gains no ellectoral votes”*). The response includes little variety in elaborative techniques, merely providing a quotation from the source material for each point. This information is weakly integrated by making vague statements following its use (*Ellectoral collages are unfair, outdated, and irrational due to this fact by it’s self*).

1–Conventions

This draft response demonstrates a partial command of basic conventions. An inconsistent use of correct punctuation (contraction apostrophes), capitalization (*i, united states*), sentence formation (fragments), and spelling (*writting, Ellectoral, actualy*) is present but does not obscure meaning.

I believe that staying with the Electoral College is the best thing in this situation. I believe this because the 538 electors are very helpful. They pick our president and our vice president. The Electoral College also picks who takes care of and guards the important people in the United States, such as the president, the vice president, and the senate.

The Electoral College is important because they help us choose our president and our vice president. The presidential election is held every four years on the Tuesday after the first Monday in November. Electors usually do what they think is best for the United States. Picking our president is something that is very important and I think the electors of the Electoral College will pick the right person for the job.

The Electoral College is also important because the electors have a big job to do. The electors have to make sure that we have a good senate, president, vice president, and good security for the president. The Electoral College is a big help for the United States.

In conclusion, the Electoral College is helpful to me because the electors both pick our president and pick who is certified to protect him/her. That is a hard job, but I am glad that we have a good Electoral College.

2–Purpose, Focus, and Organization

The response is somewhat sustained within the purpose and task with a claim (*I believe that staying with the Electoral College is the best thing in this situation*). Two reasons for continuing to use the Electoral College are identified in the opening and used to organize the response (*They pick our president and our vice president . . . also picks who takes care of and guards the important people in the United States*). Little variety in transitional strategy is used. The two ideas listed in the introduction are preceded by nearly the same language to begin each body paragraph (*The Electoral College is important, The Electoral College is also important*). The response concludes by once again repeating the two reasons.

1–Evidence and Elaboration

The response includes minimal support for the claim. Although the response includes information from the source material that the election for the President occurs on the second Tuesday following the first Monday in November, it is not relevant to the point where it is used (*Electors usually do what they think is best for the United States . . . and . . . will pick the right person for the job*). The point that the Electoral College selects guards for important people is not supported. No citation to source material is present. Language and vocabulary is general, vague, and limited (*right person for the job, good, big help*).

2–Conventions

The draft response demonstrates an adequate command of basic conventions. Although a few minor errors are present (*Monay, i*), no patterns of errors occur.

Student-8

Score Point 1/1/1

(page 1 of 2)

State Senator I disagree on keeping the Electoral College! For only the electors choose who is going to be the new President, I say we get dispose of it and change the election to most popular vote! That way we also have a say on who is going to be the new President and the new Vice President. For we also have to have a say on this.

The thing that is wrong with this system is that the voters do not vote for the President, but for the slate of the electors who in turn elect the President! like it says on source 2 paragraph 10 "If you lived in Texas and wanted to vote for [John] kerry

The Electoral College does not let us, the people, choose who is going to be the new President it only allows the electors choose who it's going to be by their vote! For an example on the 2000 U.S. Presidential race, Al Gore recieved more of the individual votes than George W. Bush, but Bush only the won election because he recieved 271 electoral votes than Al Gore's 266! It wasn't fair that

1–Purpose, Focus, and Organization

The response is related to the topic but demonstrates little awareness of the task. A claim is provided (*I disagree on keeping the Electoral College!*); however, the brevity of the response and abrupt conclusion results in insufficient demonstration of focus and organization. A few transitional strategies are present (*For an example, but*). Alternate or opposing claims are not identified or addressed.

1–Evidence and Elaboration

The response includes minimal support for the claim using information from the source material. An attempt is made to explain the process the Electoral College uses to elect the president (*like it says on source 2 paragraph 10 “If you lived in Texas and wanted to vote for [John] kerry The Electoral College does not let us, the people, choose*), and one example in which the popular vote and Electoral College vote would not have yielded the same result is described (*Al Gore recieved more of the individual votes than George W. Bush, but Bush only the won election because he recieved 271 electoral votes*). Expression of ideas is vague and vocabulary imprecise (*It wasn't fair*).

1–Conventions

The draft response demonstrates a partial command of basic conventions. This brief response contains a variety of errors in usage (*get for just, missing words*), punctuation (commas, missing end punctuation), capitalization (*kerry, The, like*), and sentence formation (run-on and fragment).

Student-9

Score Point 1/1/0

(page 1 of 2)

Well i think we should chang them becuase some people can get confussed about who they vote for. I think it be good to chang them becuase a president could get a lot more votes but when the other voter get one or two more Electoral College votes then they would win. I think they should be chang becuase there could be 500,000 voter but then for california 55 voter represen 35million voter. Like in 2000 seventeen states didn't see the candidates at all even Rhode Island and the 25 largest voter didn't even see a campaign ad.

It not even the people who elect the president it the electors who elect the president. It says that Gore had more populare votes then Bush but Its electoral College votes that help him win so they say that if u have more electoral votes then populare u win. When he increased his plurality in some states he increased his votes that shows a bad president to people and he won't now what to do the people don't feel like he there president.

1–Purpose, Focus, and Organization

The response is related to the topic but demonstrates little awareness of the task. The response includes a minimal, unclear claim that, due to the confusion during voting, a change from the Electoral College should be made (*i think we should chang them*). No explanation is provided for why the proposed alternative would create less confusion. Some minimal transitions occur within the paragraph (*but then, Like in*). No alternate or counterclaims are identified or addressed. The response is too brief to fully demonstrate knowledge of focus or organization.

1–Evidence and Elaboration

The response includes limited references to source material (*california 55 voter represen 35million voter*). Some source material either doesn't support the point (*Like in 2000 seventeen states didn't see the candidates at all even Rhode Island and the 25 largest voter didn't even see a campaign ad*) or loosely supports it (*It says that Gore had more populare votes then Bush but Its electoral College votes that help him win so they say that if u have more electoral votes then populare u win*). No citation to any source material is present. Vocabulary and sentence structure are simple and limited (*them, they, bad*).

0–Conventions

The draft response demonstrates a lack of command of conventions, with frequent and severe errors often obscuring meaning. The brief response consists of multiple conventions errors, including run-on sentences, incorrect punctuation (missing commas and apostrophes), incorrect usage (singular/plural, tense, missing words, homonyms), capitalization (*i, california*), and spelling (*becuase, confussed, campaign*).

