



## WritePlacer Information Sheet

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### What is WritePlacer?

- An untimed computer-based essay test that assesses your ability to write effectively
- The writing test measures your ability to express, organize, and support your opinions and ideas.
- You will first read a short passage and an assignment question that are focused on an important issue. You will then write an essay in which you develop your own point of view on the issue. You should support your position with appropriate reasoning and examples. The position you take will not influence your score.

#### How is the WritePlacer test graded?

- The score on the WritePlacer ranges from 0-8.
- An essay that is too short to be evaluated, written on a topic other than the one presented, or written in a language other than English will be given a score of zero.
- Your essay will be given a holistic score based on the following six characteristics of writing:
  - Purpose and Focus: Present information in a unified and coherent manner and clearly address the issue
  - Organization and Structure: Order you present and connect ideas
  - Development and Support: Develop and support your ideas
  - Sentence Variety and Style: Write sentences and paragraphs demonstrating control of vocabulary, voice, and structure
  - Mechanical Conventions: Express ideas using Standard Written English
  - Critical Thinking: Communicate a point of view and demonstrate reasoned relationships among ideas

#### Why is the placement test so important?

The placement assessment indicates the appropriate starting point for enrollment in English courses. The correct placement, based on your skills, will place you in the most appropriate course.

#### How do I prepare for WritePlacer Test?

Studying for the placement test will help you place into higher level courses. The best way to prepare is to read the [WritePlacer Guide with Sample Essays](#) and learn about the structure of the test.

<https://accuplacer.collegeboard.org/sites/default/files/accuplacer-writeplacer-sample-essays.pdf>

## **Additional Information**

### **What should I bring to take my test?**

- School or Government ID with Photo
- No cell phones or dictionaries

### **Should I guess if I am unsure of an answer?**

- You must answer every question
- You cannot omit a question or return to it later

### **When will I get my test results?**

- Typically, results are available **immediately** after finishing the test.
- You will receive detailed feedback on the essay with points for each of the six characteristics assessed.
- You will make an appointment to review your test scores.

### **Can I take the placement test more than one time?**

- You have ONE additional opportunity to take the placement test.

## Sample Essay with a Score of 1

An essay in this category demonstrates no mastery of on-demand essay writing. Severely flawed by many or most of the following weaknesses, a typical essay:

- lacks a viable point of view on the issue
- demonstrates no awareness of audience
- fails to present a main idea
- demonstrates flawed reasoning
- demonstrates no complexity of thought
- is disorganized and/or disjointed
- displays fundamental errors in word choice, usage, and sentence structure
- contains pervasive spelling, grammar, punctuation, and mechanical errors

### Sample Essay: Score of 1

no I do not think we are free to make our own decisions, because if we were free we wouldnt be able to go to jail if we were to commit a crime. we are limited in the choices we make and we have to be smart about the choices we make also. attacks have been apperaing on the news, they chose to make those decisions but had to pay the consequenses. People make good and bad decisions its up to them wether or not its good or bad. with all that said i do think that we are limited with the choices we make.

#### Annotations

Although this response occasionally mentions “choices” and “consequenses,” it presents no viable point of view on the prompt’s central question of whether our choices are our responsibility. Instead, the writing contains flawed reasoning (if we were free we wouldn’t be able to go to jail) and disjointed statements that reveal a lack of organization (...we have to be smart about the choices we make also. attacks have been apperaing on the news, they chose to make those decisions but had to pay the consequenses). The response displays numerous errors in word choice, usage, and sentence structure including fused sentences (People make good and bad decisions its up to them whether or not its good or bad). Mechanical errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar are also pervasive. This response demonstrates no mastery of on-demand essay writing and receives a holistic score of 1.

#### Scoring

Purpose and Focus, Score Point 1: This response lacks clear purpose and focus.

Organization and Structure, Score Point 1: This response presents a series of disjointed statements that are poorly organized.

Development and Support, Score Point 1: This essay needs additional ideas and support.

Sentence Variety and Style, Score Point 1: This essay exhibits limited ability to vary sentence length and use appropriate vocabulary.

Mechanical Conventions, Score Point: This response doesn’t demonstrate control of mechanical conventions.

Critical Thinking, Score Point 1: The essay lacks complexity of thought and displays flawed reasoning

## Sample Essay with a Score of 8

An essay in this category demonstrates clear and consistent mastery of on-demand essay writing, with a few minor errors.

A typical essay:

- effectively and insightfully develops a point of view on the issue
- addresses an appropriate audience and demonstrates a clear purpose for writing in the thesis statement
- demonstrates outstanding critical thinking, using effective examples, reasons, and other evidence to support its position
- is well organized and clearly focused, demonstrating clear coherence and smooth progression of ideas exhibits skillful use of language, using a varied, accurate, and apt vocabulary
- demonstrates varied and effective sentence structure
- is free of major errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation

### Sample Essay: Score of 8

In her 2008 Harvard commencement speech, author J.K. Rowling invited recent graduates to take responsibility for their own lives. Rowling argued that each individual must ardently grab the steering wheel of her own life as soon as she is able. Relying on parents, professors, or peers to give one's life direction, purpose, or structure is simply not an option.

I agree with Rowling's assertion that we are all in charge of our own lives. The complication arises, however, when we acknowledge that the materials we have been given to lead those lives vary greatly from person to person. In keeping with the car analogy, I may be driving a Toyota Corolla with 90,000 miles on it, while another person may be careening through the world from the scooped seat of a brand-new BMW. In other words, yes, we make our own choices, and we are responsible for how we lead our lives, but each one of us makes those choices and selects our paths within a framework which we cannot control.

Never is this clearer than in discussions of privilege. Axioms such as, "The rich get richer and the poor get poorer," highlight the idea that our circumstances force us to start from different places. Oprah Winfrey, for instance, is so fascinating to the American public because of her "rags to riches" story: a young woman, born into poverty, who suffered years of horrific abuse from relatives, who still managed to rise to stardom, acquire wealth, and wield power with generosity and compassion. Still other public figures receive significant scrutiny for their lack of need to self-start. President George W. Bush was frequently derided for his cushy upbringing, which led him to studies at Yale and a presidency which, to some, seemed to result more from his family wealth and political connections than from genuine preparedness for office.

Famous television personalities and politicians provide ample fodder for the frustration many of us feel when faced with Rowling's demand that we take the wheels of our own lives, and yet the complex relationship between personal responsibility and predetermined circumstance plays itself out in ordinary lives, as well. Having recently chosen to return to school for another degree, I feel emboldened and proud of this decision I am making. However, I also recognize that the support of my parents in high school—driving me to theater practice, paying for my voice lessons, buying me as many books as I could read—and their continued bolstering of me in college has laid the groundwork for my academic success and confidence. I could not have succeeded in high school, college, and graduate school, and then considered more education, without their emotional and financial support.

In the end, we each write our own stories; we are in charge of the choices we make. One eminent psychologist said it best when he claimed, "We do not have control, but we do have choices." We do not control so many things: the decade we are born, the parents we go home with, the teachers who

educate us. Yet we do have choices. We choose the clothes we wear, regardless of each decade's fashion frenzies; we choose how we relate to our parents; we choose whether or not to study for the myriad tests and quizzes that pepper our twenty-first century educations. The outcome of this venture called life will always, at least partially, elude us, but as human beings, we have been given the gift of daily, personal choice. To me, that makes all the difference.

### Annotations

This response effectively and insightfully develops its point of view that “we are responsible for how we lead our lives, but each one of us makes those choices and selects our paths within a framework which we cannot control.” Critical thinking and effective examples appear throughout the essay, but these qualities are on full display in the second body paragraph. The writer skillfully juxtaposes the inherited advantages of George W. Bush with the fortitude of Oprah Winfrey in order to examine the interplay of privilege and personal determination. The essay develops this idea even further in the next section, acknowledging that ordinary lives also bear witness to the “complex relationship between personal responsibility and predetermined circumstance.” Focused on its argument, the writing exhibits deliberate organization and clear coherence, as Rowling's ideas are used as a thread throughout the essay to respond to the prompt's complexity. The response is cohesive from start to finish, and its strong conclusion provides a sense of completeness. An effective quotation provides an appropriate response to the prompt's ultimate question (“We do not have control, but we do have choices.”). The writer follows this with well-chosen examples of outside influences beyond our control (fashion, parents, teachers) and contrasts them with corresponding choices (We choose the clothes we wear . . . how we relate to our parents . . . whether or not to study), demonstrating effective reasoning and reinforcing the overall position. The use of language is skillful, with a variety of effective sentence structures (However, I also recognize that the support of my parents in high school—driving me to theater practice, paying for my voice lessons, buying me as many books as I could read—and their continued bolstering of me in college has laid the groundwork for my academic success and confidence. . . . In the end, we each write our own stories; we are in charge of the choices we make). The writing features precise vocabulary that is accurate and apt (ample fodder, bolstering, fashion frenzies), though it is acknowledged that there are a few spelling errors. Exhibiting clear and consistent mastery of on-demand essay writing, this response earns a holistic score of 8.

### Scoring

Purpose and Focus, Score Point 3: This response shows a clear purpose and strong focus.

Organization and Structure, Score Point 3: The writer displays a strong ability to organize ideas.

Development and Support, Score Point 3: This essay is logically developed and well supported.

Sentence Variety and Style, Score Point 3: This essay demonstrates skillful control of sentence structure and style.

Mechanical Conventions, Score Point 3: Control of mechanical conventions is strong.

Critical Thinking, Score Point 3: This essay shows clear and reasoned analysis of the issue.