

WDE WY-TOPP

Writing Exemplars – 3rd Grade



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Grade 3 ELA Writing - Opinion

BACKGROUND and PURPOSE

The WY-TOPP ELA test has a Writing portion for grades 3, 5, 7, and 9. Each writing test contains one or more passages that relate to a prompt. Students are required to read passages associated with a topic, and 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. Students do not answer comprehension questions about the prompt.

The responses in this document were scored and annotated by Wyoming teachers who were trained as human scorers. As a basis for developing a common understanding of the scoring criteria, an annotation follows each response to explain the prominent characteristics of the response described in the rubric. Examples of student responses represent some of the various combinations of the score points across the scoring domains. These responses are not intended to provide a full spectrum of examples for every score point in every domain. On the WY-TOPP ELA test, student responses will be scored by an artificial intelligence (AI) engine that has been designed to predict human responses, based on the WY-TOPP Writing Rubrics. More information about the AI scoring engine is available [here](#).

For more information on the rubrics used to score writing responses on WY-TOPP, visit the WY-TOPP website under “[WY-TOPP Assessment Blueprints and Rubrics](#).”

PROMPT

Write an essay in which you give your opinion about whether cats or dogs make the best pets. Use information from the passages in your essay.

Manage your time carefully so that you can:

- read the passages;
- plan your response;
- write your response; and
- revise and edit your response.

Be sure to include:

- an introduction
- support for your opinion using information from the passages; and
- a conclusion that is related to your opinion.

To view the Grade 3 passage set, “Cats or Dogs” [click here](#).

ELA Writing Rubrics for WY-TOPP Summative Assessment - Grades 3-5 - Opinion

Grades 3-5 Opinion Writing Rubric (Score points within each domain include most of the characteristics below)			
Score	Purpose, Focus, and Organization (4-point Rubric)	Evidence and Elaboration (4-point Rubric)	Conventions of Standard English (2-point Rubric begins at score point 2)
4	<p>The response is fully sustained and consistently focused within the purpose, audience, and task; and it has a clearly stated opinion and effective organizational structure creating coherence and completeness. The response includes most of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strongly maintained opinion with little or no loosely related material 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 	<p>The response provides thorough and convincing support/evidence for the writer's opinion that includes the effective use of sources, facts, and details. The response includes most of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant evidence integrated smoothly and thoroughly with references to sources Effective use of a variety of elaborative techniques, demonstrating 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 	
3	<p>The response is adequately sustained and generally focused within the purpose, audience, and task; and it has an opinion and evident organizational structure with a sense of completeness. The response includes most of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A maintained opinion, though some loosely related material may be present Adequate use of transitional strategies with some variety to clarify the relationships between and among ideas Adequate progression of ideas from beginning to end with a sufficient introduction and conclusion 	<p>The response provides adequate support/evidence for the writer's opinion 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 evidence from sources, though references may be general, imprecise, or inconsistent 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 	
<i>Continued on the following page</i>			

ELA Writing Rubrics for WY-TOPP Summative Assessment - Grades 3-5 - Opinion

Score	Purpose, Focus, and Organization (4-point Rubric)	Evidence and Elaboration (4-point Rubric)	Conventions of Standard English (2-point Rubric)
2	<p>The response is somewhat sustained within the purpose, audience, and task but may include loosely related or extraneous material; and it may have an opinion with an inconsistent organizational structure. The response may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partially focused opinion but insufficiently sustained or unclear Inconsistent use of transitional strategies with little variety Uneven progression of ideas from beginning to end and an inadequate introduction or conclusion 	<p>The response provides uneven, cursory support/evidence for the writer's opinion that includes ineffective use of sources, facts, and details. The response may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weakly integrated evidence from sources and erratic or irrelevant references Repetitive or ineffective use of elaborative techniques Imprecise or simplistic expression of ideas Inappropriate or ineffective domain-specific vocabulary Sentences possibly limited to simple constructions 	<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
1	<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 opinion and little or no discernible organizational structure. The response may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absent, confusing, or ambiguous opinion Frequent extraneous ideas impeding understanding Few or no transitional strategies Too brief to demonstrate knowledge of focus or organization 	<p>The response provides minimal support/evidence for the writer's opinion, 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 from the source material Expression of ideas that is vague, unclear, or confusing Limited or inappropriate language or domain-specific vocabulary Sentences limited to simple constructions 	<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
0			<p>The response demonstrates a lack of command of conventions, with frequent and severe errors often obscuring meaning.</p>

Cats or Dogs!

Cats are better than dogs.

But why are they better? Well if you want to know read on. Well they have some advantages. One is they groom themselves the next is that they don't need attention they can just do what they want when your at school and the last is that you don't have to train them to be a good pet they just are.

Cats groom themselves. So that makes it easier to have one because then you don't need to spend time grooming them and they can still be clean. That helps a lot cause then you can do your work or go to school and then you don't need to spend time washing them. And then you can get ready faster and you won't be late. And when your not late you can have a little time for yourself. So cats don't get you late

And cats don't need attention. So cats don't get lonely when your at school or at somewhere else so then you don't need to worry about them being lonely when your gone. And then you can feel good instead of bad when you leave to go somewhere. And they entertain themselves so they can be alone for a while. So cats are pretty independant.

And the last reason why is that you don't need to train cats to be good pets they just are. And you have to train dogs to be patient. And to sit and stay and not jump on people. And the worst not to hurt random people. So cats are way easier to handle then other pets.

So in conclusion cats are better than most pets. The reasons were "Cats groom themselves", "Cats don't need company", "Cats don't need to be trained". So cats are my favorite pets.

Grade 3 ELA Writing - Opinion

Student-1 Annotation

Score Point 4/3/2

(page 2 of 2)

4-Purpose/Focus/Organization

The response is fully sustained and consistently focused within the purpose and task, which is to provide an opinion about which pet is better than the other. The opinion is clearly stated (*Cats are better than dogs.*) and strongly maintained throughout the entire response (*...they have some advantages. ...you don't need to train cats to be good pets they just are. And you have to train dogs to be patient.*) There is an effective organizational structure that includes a satisfying introduction (*One is they groom themselves the next is that they don't need attention they can just do what they want when your at school and the last is that you don't have to train them to be a good pet they just are.*) and a conclusion that reiterates the opinion, creating a sense of completeness (*The reasons were "Cats groom themselves", "Cat's don't need company", "Cats don't need to be trained".*) A variety of transitions are used to clarify the relationships between and among ideas (*One, next, last, So in conclusion...*) and to support the logical progression of ideas from beginning to end.

3-Evidence/Elaboration

The response provides facts and details (*Cats groom themselves. And cats don't need attention.*) that adequately support the writer's opinion but includes no direct attribution of the source as a reference. Elaboration for the three points is adequate (*That helps a lot cause then you can do your work or go to school and then you don't need to spend time washing them. And the worst not to hurt random people. So cats don't get lonely when your at school or at somewhere else so then you don't need to worry about them being lonely when your gone.*) A mixture of precise language (*advantages, attention, entertain, independent*) and more general expression of ideas (*they can just do what they want, when your at school or at somewhere else*) is evident.

2-Conventions

Although the response contains minor errors in usage (*when your at school, easier to handle then other pets*), this response demonstrates an adequate command of basic conventions. A variety of punctuation, including question marks, periods, commas, apostrophes, and quotations marks, are used. Capitalization is used correctly. Many sentences begin with conjunctions but meaning is not obscured.

I feel that dogs are better pets for so many reasons. Bark, Arf dogs are perfect pets for every one. Here are three reasons why dogs are perfect because they make you healthy, they are good friends, and they are very good listeners.

Dogs can make people and their owners healthy. In the the text it said that "dogs make many people healthy". One example is they help them get better quicker because they are probably going to be around you. Another is if they are healthy you will probably get healthy to. Also dogs are usually healthy because they try to stay healthy. In conclusion they can stay healthy for a long time.

They can make you happy. In the text it said "dogs can be good friends". One example is they can make you happy when your sad for example you got in trouble and then you were sad and then your dog cheered you up. Another one is they can help you for example you might have fell down then your dog helped you up. Also they are kind for example they don't hurt you or scare you. In conclusion they are curious so they like to meet new people.

Student-2

Score Point 4/3/2

(page 2 of 3)

They listen well. In the text it said” that they are really good listeners”. For example they have good ears. They can’t tell anyone because they can’t talk like humans. If they listen you and your dog can get a better relationship. In conclusion you can pretty much tell them anything.

I feel that dogs are great pets for people that need them. I talked about three things they were they can make you healthy, they are good friends, and they are great listeners. In conclusion dogs are amazing as pets.

Grade 3 ELA Writing - Opinion

Student-2 Annotation

Score Point 4/3/2

(page 3 of 3)

4-Purpose/Focus/Organization

The response is fully sustained and consistently focused within the task of providing an opinion about whether dogs or cats make better pets. The opinion is stated within the introduction, along with three reasons based explicitly on the source to support the opinion (*...they make you healthy, they are good friends, and they are very good listeners*). In sentence 2 of paragraph 1, the response includes examples of onomatopoeia (*Bark, Arf*) that may provide interest but seem unrelated to the purpose and does little to support the opinion. The organizational structure is effective (introduction, body, conclusion), and the ideas progress logically from beginning to end. One transitional phrase (*In conclusion*) is used at the end of most paragraphs.

3-Evidence/Elaboration

The response provides adequate support for the writer's opinion that includes facts and details integrated from the source (*In the text it said that "dogs make many people healthy". In the text it said "dogs can be good friends". In the text it said "that they are really good listeners."*). Each fact from the source is elaborated with multiple examples, although vague and imprecise at times (*One example is they help them get better quicker because they are probably going to be around you. One example is they can make you happy when your sad for example you got in trouble and then you were sad and then your dog cheered you up. If they listen you and your dog can get a better relationship.*). The response demonstrates adequate expression of ideas with a mix of general and precise language (*Another is if they are healthy you will probably get healthy to. Another one is they can help you for example you might have fell down then your dog helped you up.*) In paragraph 3, the final sentence is unrelated to the ideas stated throughout the paragraph (*In conclusion they are curious so they like to meet new people.*). A mix of sentence structures are employed throughout the response.

2-Conventions

The response demonstrates an adequate command of basic conventions. While some errors in spelling and usage occur (*every one, to, your sad, might have fell down*), no pattern of errors is evident. While numerous comma errors are present, the response demonstrates an adequate command of punctuation, including the use of commas in a series (*...they can make you healthy, they are good friends, and they are great listeners*) and attempts to use quotation marks around text quoted from the source (*In the text it said "dogs can be good friends"*). Contractions are formed correctly (*don't, can't*), and words (*reasons, listeners, probably, conclusion, relationship*) are generally spelled correctly. Some run-on sentences are present, but sentence construction follows adequate patterns for this grade level.

Pets

Dogs are healthy and keep you healthy, too. Dogs also have companionship that will last a lifetime. Dogs are really loyal to their owner. Dogs are really good pets in this article you will learn how much I love dogs more than cats.

When an unexpected visitor comes to your home good and loyal dogs will bark and growl. Sometimes they will even fight until you wake up or come to the room. If you have a guard dog they will always go and try to wake you up and will fight. Dogs can be scary in many ways.

Dogs can also keep healthy if you walk them twice a day even in rain or snow. Dogs can keep you healthy, too. Dogs have been studied so if you have a dog you will stay healthier. If you are sick but have a dog you will heal quicker.

Dogs are good listeners. Dogs can be very patient, too. If you leave your dog in the car while you go to the restroom or a restaurant your dog will be patient in the car or at home. Good dogs listen well because if you train a dog it will be good and usually listen to your command.

These are three reasons why I like dogs better than cats. These three reasons are they keep you healthier, they are good companions, and dogs are safe. these three reasons are why I think you should get a dog instead of a cat.

Grade 3 ELA Writing - Opinion

Student-3 Annotation

Score Point 3/3/2

(page 2 of 2)

3-Purpose/Focus/Organization

The response is adequately sustained and generally focused within the purpose, audience, and task. An opinion is stated (*Dogs are really good pets in this article you will learn how much I love dogs more than cats.*) and maintained throughout. An organizational structure is evident as the essay begins with an introduction, continues with a body, and ends with a conclusion; however, the body paragraphs do not follow the order presented in the introduction (*Dogs are healthy and keep you healthy, too. Dogs have companionship that will last a lifetime. Dogs are really loyal to their owner.*) There are no transitional phrases to smooth the flow of ideas. The conclusion, which restates the opinion, is adequate.

3-Evidence/Elaboration

The response provides adequate support/evidence for the writer's opinion that includes generally integrated evidence from the source (*Dogs can keep you healthy, too. If you are sick but have a dog you will heal quicker.*) Adequate use of elaborative techniques is present (*When an unexpected visitor comes to your home good and loyal dogs will bark and growl. If you have a guard dog they will always go and try to wake you up and will fight.*). Ideas are expressed using a mix of precise and general language (*If you leave your dog in the car while you go to the restroom or a restaurant your dog will be patient in the car or at home.*). Domain specific vocabulary is appropriate for the audience and purpose (*Good dogs listen well because if you train a dog it will be good and usually listen to your command.*). A mixture of simple and complex sentence structure is employed. (*Dogs can be very patient, too. If you leave your dog in the car while you go to the restroom or a restaurant your dog will be patient in the car or at home.*)

2-Conventions

The response demonstrates an adequate command of basic conventions. A minor error in usage occurs (*go and try to*) and proper use of capitalization and spelling are consistent. Punctuation and sentence formation are adequate for the grade level with few errors occurring (*Dogs are really good pets in this article you will learn...*).

Do you think dogs or cats are better pets? I think dogs are better pets. I like dogs as better because they are so playful and loving.

First, dogs can keep you healthier by you walking them. Dogs can get healthier by playing outside in the fresh air. Cats don't want to go on walks with you like some dogs do. Cats don't want to go play with you outside like some dogs want to.

Next, dogs can keep you safe by warning you if there is a fire in the house. That is a good thing so you can call the fire department before the fire gets worse. I think if you have a cat the fire would get really bad before you know there is a fire because they would probably just sleep through the sound of the fire.

Last, dogs keep you healthier. Studies say people with dogs likely get sick but if they do it goes away faster than normal sickness. That is a good thing so you will likely not get sick all year but if you do it will go by faster. With cats they sometimes eat mice and probably have rabies from the mice and bring it in your house.

In conclusion, I think dogs are better pets for these reasons. They keep you healthier by walking. They keep you safe by barking if there is a fire. They keep you healthier by not getting you sick.

Grade 3 ELA Writing - Opinion

Student-4 Annotation

Score Point 3/3/2

(page 2 of 2)

3-Purpose, Focus, and Organization

The response is adequately sustained and generally focused within the purpose and task of providing an opinion about whether dogs or cats make better pets. The opinion is stated within the introduction (*I like dogs as better....*); however, the introduction uses reasons unrelated to the source or the body of the response (*because they are so playful and loving*). Transitions (*First, Next, Last, In conclusion*) are used adequately with some variety to maintain adequate progression of ideas from beginning to end with a sufficient conclusion (*In conclusion, I think dogs are better pets for these reasons.*).

3-Evidence/Elaboration

The response provides adequate evidence to support the writer's opinion (*First, dogs can keep you healthier by you walking with them. Next, dogs can keep you safe by warning you if there is a fire in the house.*); however, the response does not attempt to attribute the source. Ideas are expressed adequately with a mix of precise (*warning, fire department, barking, healthier*) and general language (*good thing, really bad, not getting you sick*). The response contains a variety of simple and complex sentences.

2-Conventions

The response demonstrates an adequate command of basic conventions. Words are spelled correctly. Periods and question marks are used correctly. Commas are used correctly after transitional words and phrases (*First, Next, Last, In conclusion,*). Contractions are formed correctly using apostrophes (*don't*). The conclusion employs parallelism (*by walking, by barking, by not getting you sick*), which demonstrates a more mature command of conventions.

Grade 3 ELA Writing - Opinion

Student-5

Score Point 2/2/2

(page 1 of 2)

Do you think dogs or cats are good pets? Well I think dogs are good pets. You are going to learn about why I think dogs are good pets. First, dogs can make you healthier. Next, most dogs can keep you safe. Last, walking with your dog will make you both better. This are why i think dogs are good pets.

First, walking with you dog will make you both strong by making your muscle get stronger by exercising with them. Next, most dogs can keep you safe by barking if there is danger and scare off intruders. They can also walk you across a street safely. Last, they can make you healthier.

Now you have learned about three things about why dogs are good pets. First, walking with you dog will make you both strong. Next, most dogs can keep you safe. Last, they can make you healthy.

Grade 3 ELA Writing - Opinion

Student-5 Annotation

Score Point 2/2/2

(page 2 of 2)

2-Purpose/Focus/Organization

The response is somewhat sustained within the purpose and task of providing an opinion about whether dogs or cats make better pets. Basic transitional strategies (*First, Next, Last*) are used repetitively. The ideas offer limited progression beyond the initial statement of opinion found in the introduction. The introduction states the three supporting reasons. The body consists of one paragraph, which provides minimal additional support for those three reasons (*First walking with you dog will make you both strong by making your muscle get stronger by exercising with them. Next, most dogs can keep you safe by barking if there is danger and scare off intruders. They can also walk you across a street safely.*). The conclusion is essentially a restatement of the introduction (*First, walking with you dog will make you both strong. Next, most dogs can keep you safe. Last, they can make you healthy.*).

2-Evidence/Elaboration

The response provides cursory support for the writer's opinion that dogs are good pets. Minimal evidence from the source is used (*First walking with you dog will make you both strong by making your muscle get stronger by exercising with them. Next, most dogs can keep you safe by barking if there is danger and scare off intruders. They can also walk you across a street safely.*) Simplistic ideas are expressed in mostly simple sentences (*First, dogs can make you healthier. Next, most dogs can keep you safe. Last, walking with your dog will make you both better.*).

2-Conventions

The response demonstrates an adequate command of basic conventions. No usage errors are found. Commas are used correctly after introductory transitional words. Periods and question marks are used correctly. With one exception (*i*), capitalization is used correctly. Words are spelled correctly (*exercising, intruders, healthier*).

Grade 3 ELA Writing - Opinion

Student-6

Score Point 2/2/2

(page 1 of 2)

I think dogs will make better pets than cats because when people are in danger the dog tries their best to keep the person safe and a cat will just find somewhere to hide. And another reason is that a dog will risk their life to save you and a cat will just run away. And onther reason is that when the owner is in trouble and the dog couldn't get to him he will go to his neighbors house and try to tell where he might be and find him.

And if there was a fire and the owner has a dog the dog will try to wake up the owner and when the owner wakes up he will call 911 and then the firefighters can put out the fire. And onther reason that dogs are better than cats is that dogs can smell things that are dangerous and that can harm people but cats will not smell things they would rather stay with their owner.

And onther reason that dogs are better pets than cats is that a dog can save someone from drowning they will go in the water and save the person and when he saves the person he will be saved and a cat will not go into water because cats don't like the water so a cat won't save the person and the person will drown and a dog will save the person from drowning.

Grade 3 ELA Writing - Opinion

Student-6 Annotation

Score Point 2/2/2

(page 2 of 2)

2-Purpose/Focus/Organization

The response is somewhat sustained within the purpose and task of providing an opinion about cats and dogs (*I think dogs will make better pets than cats because when people are in danger the dog tries their best to keep the person safe and a cat will just find somewhere to hide. And onther reason that dogs are better pets than cats is that a dog can save someone from drowning....*), but the focus is not clear as much of the response is repetitive (*...the dog tries their best to keep the person safe and a cat will just find somewhere to hide. And another reason is that a dog will risk their life to save you and a cat will just run away. And onther reason that dogs are better pets than cats is that a dog can save someone from drowning they will go in the water and save the person and when he saves the person he will be saved and a cat will not go into the water because cats don't like the water....*). The repetition hinders a progression of ideas from beginning to end. The response is inadequately developed; it lacks effective transitional strategies and a conclusion.

2-Evidence/Elaboration

The response provides limited text-based evidence to support the stated opinion and makes no attempt to attribute the source. Elaboration is minimal as the ideas are closely related and repetitive at times (*keep the person safe, dog will risk their life, dog can save someone*). Ideas are expressed simplistically with ineffective vocabulary (*...a dog can save someone from drowning they will go in the water and save the person and when he saves the person he will be saved*).

2-Conventions

Although a few errors in spelling (*onther, neighbors*) and sentence formation (rambling and run-on sentences) are present, this response demonstrates an adequate command of basic conventions. Apostrophes are consistently used correctly to form contractions.

Grade 3 ELA Writing - Opinion

Student-7

Score Point 1/1/1

(page 1 of 1)

Do you want a cat or a dog for a pet? I think dogs are better than cats. Cats are comer than dogs. Dogs can help people get around if they are blind. Cats are cuddly. Cats can be mean to other animals and people. I like dogs better than cats.

Student-7 Annotation

Score Point 1/1/1

1-Purpose/Focus/Organization

The response is related to the topic but demonstrates little awareness of the purpose, which is to provide an opinion and support it with evidence from the source. The response provides a stated opinion (*I think dogs are better than cats.*), but the focus is inconsistent as the evidence appears to waver for and against the stated opinion (*Cats are comer than dogs.*). No transitions are used in the response, which is too brief to demonstrate knowledge of focus or organization.

1-Evidence/Elaboration

The response provides minimal support for the writer's opinion, including little evidence based on the source. The evidence does not consistently support the stated opinion (*Dogs can help people get around if they are blind. Cats are cuddly. Cats can be mean to other animals and people.*) Sentences are limited to simple constructions.

1-Conventions

The response demonstrates a partial command of basic conventions. One spelling error is committed (*comer*) in sentence 3, which hinders the reader's comprehension. The entire response consists of seven sentences, six of which are simple in construction. While the response does not include many errors in conventions, the response is too brief to demonstrate an adequate command of basic conventions.