

# ESSENTIAL WRITING AND LANGUAGE SKILLS

*Preparation for High School Equivalency Tests*

Workbook Excerpt from  
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*Learning Made CERTAIN*

INTERACTIVE PRACTICE WORKBOOK

Aligned to the Common Core State Standards and College and Career Readiness Standards

# Organizing Extended Responses

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## Connections

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### Have you ever ...

- Defended a decision you made for your company?
- Expressed your views about a local issue for your school?
- Analyzed news articles about a political controversy?

Good organization will help you communicate well about complex topics. At work or in college, you will need to write responses to reports, books, or memos. Many careers and degrees require independent research to investigate topics. In your personal life, you may need to respond to a letter from a company, write a blog post reviewing a movie, or exchange emails about a political issue.

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In an **extended response** you analyze written material and present your ideas backed by evidence. On an exam, your time will often be limited. The writing process will help you evaluate the issue, gather evidence, formulate your conclusion, and organize your work.

 **Plan:** Review materials, develop your central idea, find evidence, and begin organizing your ideas into an appropriate structure.

 **Draft:** Write a response within a clear organizational structure, including a beginning, middle, and ending.

 **Evaluate:** Review your writing for clarity, sense, and transitions. Make sure your organization communicates well and is easy to follow.

 **Submit:** Make any final corrections, and submit your response.

An extended response should have good organization, well-developed ideas, and substantial details. Organization is essential to an effective response.





## Developing an Organized Extended Response

A well-organized response has a clear beginning, middle, and ending. It contains supporting details clearly connected to the central idea. The organization is appropriate to the purpose, and there is a clear, logical progression of ideas.

Read the following passages and write an extended response in which you analyze both positions. Explain which position is best supported and why. Include multiple pieces of evidence from the passages to support your answer. Typing your response on a computer will give you the best practice. Your total writing time should be about 45 minutes.

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### Non-voters Are Not Participating in the Political Process

U.S. voter turnout has shrunk to abysmally low levels during the last three decades. In 1996, less than half the qualifying citizens bothered to cast votes for the President of the United States. After fighting to secure our independence and to obtain voting rights for minorities and women, it is a shame that our citizens have become so complacent. Folks, we are dropping the ball.

As the eminent philosopher John Stuart Mill said, “Political machinery does not act of itself. As it is first made, so it has to be worked, by men, and even by ordinary men. It needs, not their simple acquiescence, but their active participation.” Voter participation is an example of active participation at the most fundamental level. It is the one act that every ordinary man can do. It happens only once or twice a year and does not require extensive traveling, public speaking engagements, or monetary investment. Without democratic participation, government fails. Our government doesn’t simply keep running without maintenance and care. Wake up, non-voters! Without full voter participation our government is not complete, and we will continue to drop the ball.



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### Non-voting Is Action

I am writing in response to the article accusing non-voters of “dropping the ball.” This narrow perception is so far from the truth that I wonder if the author has any idea at all about the nature of today’s political climate. Today’s U.S. voters are presented with a two-party system that is so rigid and heavily enforced that other parties have little to no chance of ever presenting their views to the general public, much less getting elected.

The result is a large group of voters who choose not to vote as a means of expressing their distaste for the consistently limited choice of candidates. By choosing not to vote, the citizen is proclaiming, “I don’t like either of them.” While this may

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not seem like John Stuart Mill’s idea of “active participation,” it is the only voting-booth-related action available to citizens who refuse to choose the lesser of two evils. Rather than blame non-voters for “dropping the ball,” let’s look at our disenfranchising political system.



### Plan

If you have 45 minutes to write an extended response, it helps to come to the task prepared with an organizational structure in mind. The most common organizational structure for this type of writing is a **Statement and Support** structure. Start by using and learning the **Statement and Support** graphic organizer.

An extended response is dependent on material that you must understand and analyze. Spend about 10 minutes of planning time purposefully reading. Identify important ideas, good or flawed arguments, and other details that will help you build a central idea.



1. Spend about 10 minutes filling out the graphic organizer with a central idea, supporting ideas, and evidence from the passages. You may expand the chart to include more supporting ideas.

### Statement and Support

<b>Central Idea:</b>	<b>Details or Explanation:</b>
<b>Supporting Idea:</b>	<b>Details and Evidence:</b>
<b>Supporting Idea:</b>	<b>Details and Evidence:</b>
<b>Conclusion:</b>	<b>Details or Explanation:</b>

You might complete the organizer like this:

<p><b>Central Idea:</b> “Non-voters Are Not Participating in the Political Process” has a better argument.</p>	<p><b>Details or Explanation:</b> Provides some facts and evidence, while the other is unsupported opinion.</p>
<p><b>Supporting Idea:</b> “Not Participating” uses a logical argument that government doesn’t work without voter participation and that it is not a huge task to vote.</p>	<p><b>Details and Evidence:</b> “political machinery does not act of itself” Voting does affect government. “It happens only once or twice a year and does not require extensive traveling” True, though voting can sometimes be difficult.</p>
<p><b>Supporting Idea:</b> “Non-voting Is Action” lacks support</p>	<p><b>Details and Evidence:</b> “Other parties have little to no chance of ... getting elected” is not always true. “Choose not to vote as a means of expressing their distaste” has no evidence. Is this really why?</p>
<p><b>Conclusion:</b> The first is better supported but is calling people “complacent” helpful?</p>	<p><b>Details or Explanation:</b> Voting can be made easier or mandated. Just calling people “complacent” doesn’t help solve the problem.</p>



**Draft**

Your draft should include a beginning, middle, and ending:

- **Beginning:** Introduce your ideas. Include an interesting beginning, your central idea, and any details or explanation you need to introduce your ideas. You don’t need to list all your supporting ideas. That’s not interesting, and it doesn’t set up your ideas for the reader. In fact, it can cause repetition in your writing and a lack of fluidity.
- **Middle:** Explain each of your supporting ideas, using details and evidence. Connect each idea clearly to your central idea. Restate ideas from the passage instead of relying on direct quotes. If you do use a direct quote, explain its significance.
- **Ending:** Connect your ideas to a larger picture, or draw additional conclusions about your central idea. What makes your central idea meaningful? What did you discover in the process of planning and drafting? What additional thoughts do you have? Sum up your ideas, but be careful not to be redundant.



2. Spend about 20 minutes drafting your extended response on a computer or separate sheet of paper.



### Evaluate

Evaluate your organization as you write and after you complete your draft:

- Do you have logical transitions between ideas?
- Do you make connections between your arguments and evidence?
- Do you have evidence and details to support your ideas?
- Do you have a strong central idea supported by the organization?



3. Spend about 10 minutes evaluating your organization and revising your work.



### Submit

**Submit**

Take a final look over your extended response to make any final corrections. Then, submit your response. Here is a sample response:

Why do some citizens choose not to vote? Are they dissatisfied or complacent? The article “Non-voters Are Not Participating in the Political Process” claims that non-voters are “dropping the ball.” It presents a stronger case than the rebuttal article, which attributes a specific attitude to non-voters with little evidence.

The author of the “Not Participating” article makes a logical argument that voter participation is necessary for a government to function properly. He or she quotes John Stuart Mill that government does not run itself. Voting does affect government policies and actions. The author also argues that voting is not difficult since it happens seldom and since polling booths are near every neighborhood. Though the author supports his or her idea with facts, voting can sometimes be difficult for those with no transportation, no child care, or difficulty getting off work.

The rebuttal article claims that people choose not to vote because they are dissatisfied with the lack of choices in the two-party system. It claims that not voting is a form of active participation. The article makes a valid point that the two-party system forces out alternative opinions, but it overstates the idea that other parties can’t get elected. Third-party candidates are elected in local elections, as governors, and as congressmen. However, the author’s main point is that people don’t vote due to disgust with the two-party system, and the article fails to give any evidence to support this statement. Is political dissatisfaction really the reason non-voters don’t visit the polls?

In truth, there are likely many types of non-voters. Understanding their reasoning requires sociological study which is lacking in both opinion articles. Though the article opposing non-voters is stronger, scolding non-voters for “dropping the ball” accomplishes little. Examining ideas such as mandatory voting, early voting, and voting by mail is a better way to attack the problem of voter non-participation.

Practice  
It!

Use the following passages for exercise 1.

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I am certainly not an advocate for frequent and untried changes in laws and constitutions. I think moderate imperfections had better be borne with; because, when once known, we accommodate ourselves to them, and find practical means of correcting their ill effects. But I know also, that laws and institutions must go hand in hand with the progress of the human mind. As that becomes more developed, more enlightened, as new discoveries are made, new truths disclosed, and manners and opinions change with the change of circumstances, institutions must advance also, and keep pace with the times. We might as well require a man to wear still the coat which fitted him when a boy, as civilized society to remain ever under the regimen of their barbarous ancestors.



—Thomas Jefferson

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Source: Thomas Jefferson, Letter to Samuel Kercheval, June 12, 1816. Available at <http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/letter-to-samuel-kercheval/>

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The U.S. Supreme Court makes interpretations of our constitutional rights, but sometimes their interpretations are simply wrong. In its Citizens United ruling, the Court ruled that corporations as “associations of citizens” retain the right of free speech based on the First Amendment to the Constitution. Because of this ruling, corporations are allowed to spend unlimited amounts of money, often anonymously, to support politicians and political causes.

However, free speech is a human right. Corporations are inhuman, legal entities without inherent rights. Corporations exist to protect their owners and officers from liability from their businesses. Should they then be considered “associations of citizens” with rights to free speech? Citizens can support candidates. Corporations are not citizens. They do not vote. They cannot be jailed. They are self-interested in laws that will help them make money. That is why I support a constitutional amendment declaring that corporations do not have constitutional rights.

—Alphonse Kittridge, Letter to the Editor

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## Organizing Extended Responses



1. In your response, develop an argument about how Mr. Kittridge’s position reflects the enduring issue expressed in the excerpt from Thomas Jefferson. Analyze the strength of Mr. Kittridge’s argument. Incorporate relevant and specific evidence from the passages and your own knowledge of the enduring issue to support your analysis. Type your response on a computer if possible or use a separate sheet of paper. Take up to 25 minutes to respond.

a. **Plan:** Spend about five minutes filling out the graphic organizer with a central idea, supporting ideas, and evidence from the passages.

### Statement and Support

<b>Central Idea:</b>	<b>Details or Explanation:</b>
<b>Supporting Idea:</b>	<b>Details and Evidence:</b>
<b>Supporting Idea:</b>	<b>Details and Evidence:</b>
<b>Conclusion:</b>	<b>Details or Explanation:</b>

b. **Draft:** Spend about 15 minutes drafting your extended response on a computer or on a separate sheet of paper.

c. **Evaluate and Submit:** Spend about five minutes evaluating your organization and revising your work before finalizing your extended response.

Use the following passage to complete exercise 2.

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### Zero-Tolerance Policies in Schools

Many schools have implemented “zero-tolerance” policies toward violence among students. These policies are often responses to school shootings and other extreme instances of school violence. Under zero-tolerance policies, any violence will result in suspension or expulsion. These policies have resulted in significant controversy.



The goal of zero-tolerance violence policies is to discourage violence by removing any violent students from the school. Proponents state that students cannot learn where there is the threat of violent behavior, and expelling all students who participate in violence is a strong deterrent. They argue that strong policies are needed in order to prevent disastrous violent events such as school shootings.

A zero-tolerance violence policy disallows students from making excuses and removes potentially biased administrative decisions based on conflicting reports from students, according to proponents. Even teacher reports can be unreliable, proponents say, since witness reports of what happened in violent situations is notoriously undependable. Zero-tolerance violence policies in schools discourage all violent behavior so that schools can maintain a safe environment for learning, proponents say.

However, zero-tolerance violence policies have come under criticism for their unconditional response to violent behavior. Students who are bullied or attacked must not defend themselves or they will face expulsion in many situations. In some instances, a student who is attacked is considered involved in a violent incident, whether or not he or she fights back.

Parents and students argue that expulsion is often unfair and unnecessary, and some parents object that they should have a say in the punishment of their sons and daughters. Instead of creating a violence-free, safe environment, opponents say, zero-tolerance policies create an insecure atmosphere where students fear they can be expelled by a twist of fate. Opponents are also concerned that expulsion does not deal with the problem of violent behavior; it merely removes violence from the school and pushes it into the community.

Debate over zero-tolerance violence policies continues as communities try to balance individual rights with the good of the school as a whole.

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## Organizing Extended Responses

-  2. Read the passage, which gives arguments for and against zero-tolerance violence policies in schools. In your response, analyze both positions to determine which one is best supported. Use specific evidence from the passage to support your claim. Take approximately 45 minutes to respond.
- a. **Plan:** Spend about 10 minutes filling out the graphic organizer with a central idea, supporting ideas, and evidence from the passages.

### Statement and Support

<b>Central Idea:</b>	<b>Details or Explanation:</b>
<b>Supporting Idea:</b>	<b>Details and Evidence:</b>
<b>Supporting Idea:</b>	<b>Details and Evidence:</b>
<b>Conclusion:</b>	<b>Details or Explanation:</b>

- b. **Draft:** Spend about 20 minutes drafting your extended response on a computer or on a separate sheet of paper.
- c. **Evaluate and Submit:** Spend about 10 minutes evaluating your organization and revising your work before finalizing your extended response.



## Check Your Skills

Use the following passage for exercises 1 and 2.

People use energy drinks to stay alert while driving, to stay up late and study, or as a morning or afternoon boost. These drinks cause an increase in energy often followed by a “crash.” Energy drinks contain caffeine—sometimes as much as 184 milligrams—combined with sweeteners and other ingredients. Even if you’ve never been tempted to reach for an energy drink, you are probably familiar with the controversy over this relatively new addition to our beverage aisles.

Because of the extreme levels of caffeine and the resulting negative health effects, some consumers have proposed banning energy drinks or developing regulations to keep them away from children and expectant mothers. Proponents of a ban are especially concerned about the industry’s penchant for marketing to children and teens, in some instances distributing free samples at youth sporting events.

In 2010, a high school football player in Missouri had a seizure and stopped breathing after consuming an energy drink. He now speaks against the use of energy drinks and works to get them removed from campuses. The symptoms that appear on the list of energy drink incidents documented by the Food and Drug Administration include convulsions, hypertension, loss of consciousness, anaphylactic shock, renal failure, and death. There have also been cases of fetal distress syndrome and miscarriages by pregnant women who consumed energy drinks.

Banning energy drinks or increasing regulation might seem to be in the public interest. However, companies are quick to point out that there is not always evidence that health events such as seizures are the direct result of caffeine toxicity.

Energy drink enthusiasts point out that the drinks often contain beneficial ingredients such as ginkgo biloba, which may improve memory, and açai berries, which contain antioxidants. Some who are opposed to bans and regulation describe the targeting of energy drink companies as reminiscent of political anti-tobacco campaigns that used children’s health as an excuse to punish successful companies. They state that the health risks of tobacco are widespread and costly, while energy drinks provide a benefit in addition to the risks. Opponents of regulation also argue that in a free market system consumers should be able to make their own individual health and food choices.



## Organizing Extended Responses



1. The article presents arguments by those who propose barring energy drinks from the market and those who are opposed to a ban. In your response, analyze both positions to determine which one is best supported. Use specific evidence from the passage to support your claim.

Write your answer below or type your response on a computer. Take up to 45 minutes to respond.

### *The Writing Process*



#### **Draft**

To provide details, paraphrase information from the passages.

Explain the author's meaning and the connection to your ideas.

Use the questions on page 329 to evaluate your response.



2. A medical report says that, while 100 milligrams of caffeine might have some health consequences, it is generally safe for teenagers to consume 100 milligrams of caffeine in one day. Your city proposes two potential laws: a ban on drinks that contain more than 100 milligrams of caffeine per serving and a ban on selling energy drinks to anyone 18 or younger. Write a response in support of one of these laws over the other. Use specific evidence from the passage to support your claim.

Write your answer below or type your response on a computer. Take up to 45 minutes to respond.

### *Remember the Concept*

Use a **Statement and Support** organizational structure for extended responses.

Identify a central idea, supporting ideas, and conclusion. Find support for each of your ideas.

Use the questions on page 329 to evaluate your response.



# Self-Evaluation of Your Writing

**E**valuating your writing is an important skill. Use the following questions to rate your writing and identify problems. The more you practice the writing process and evaluate your results, the more your writing will improve. When you use the following questions, try to identify specific examples from your writing that show your writing's strengths and weaknesses.

You may make copies of this section to evaluate multiple writing assignments. Not every question will apply to every task, so you may skip evaluation questions that are not appropriate to the assignment. Average the scores for each question to rate your response as (3) excellent, (2) acceptable, or (1) not acceptable.

When you receive feedback from an instructor, compare the feedback to your self-evaluation. This will help you learn to evaluate your writing more effectively.

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## **Creation of Arguments and Use of Evidence**

1. How well do you create original logical arguments and set up a central idea or purpose that is connected to the prompt?
  - (3) Exceptionally Well: The purpose is focused and clearly connected to the prompt.
  - (2) Somewhat/Sometimes Well: The argument may stray from the purpose at times but typically shows some connection to the prompt.
  - (1) Not Well: An argument may be present but lacks purpose or does not connect to the prompt.

2. How well does your writing use relevant and specific evidence?
  - (3) Exceptionally Well: Evidence and explanations are specific and directly support the purpose. Evidence is from a reliable source.
  - (2) Somewhat/Sometimes Well: Evidence may be loosely related or not relevant at times. More evidence may be needed.
  - (1) Not Well: Evidence is lacking or does not come from a reliable source.
  
3. How well does your response evaluate the arguments in the passage?
  - (3) Exceptionally Well: The response thoroughly analyzes the arguments in a passage. This includes evaluating claims, identifying assumptions or logical fallacies, and determining the credibility of sources.
  - (2) Somewhat/Sometimes Well: The response partially analyzes the arguments and issues in the source text. Analysis may be too basic, limited, or include inaccuracies.
  - (1) Not Well: The response minimally analyzes the issue or the argument presented in the source text. The response may completely lack analysis or show no understanding of the argument.
  
4. How could you improve in this category?

### **Development of Ideas and Organizational Structure**

1. How well does your writing logically develop ideas and elaborate your central ideas with relevant details?
  - (3) Exceptionally Well: Ideas are well developed and easy to follow. Most ideas are explained and supported.
  - (2) Somewhat/Sometimes Well: Some ideas are not fully developed or are vague.
  - (1) Not Well: Some ideas are not sufficiently developed or do not completely make sense. There is little elaboration of central or supporting ideas.

2. How well does your writing create a progression of ideas from one to the other that ties details to your central idea?
  - (3) Exceptionally Well: The ideas progress in a way that makes sense. There is a clear connection between the main points and details that further develop them.
  - (2) Somewhat/Sometimes Well: The ideas progress but details may be disorganized or fail to connect to supporting ideas or the central idea.
  - (1) Not Well: The ideas are undeveloped or fail to make sense. There is little to no elaboration of ideas.
  
3. How well does your writing present a clear organizational structure that supports your purpose?
  - (3) Exceptionally Well: The writing is organized in a way that shows the message and purpose. The writing uses effective transitions.
  - (2) Somewhat/Sometimes Well: The organization of the writing is inconsistent or only partially effective. Transitions are used inconsistently.
  - (1) Not Well: The writing has no clear organization and lacks effective transitions.
  
4. How well does your writing establish a style and tone that is appropriate to its intended audience and purpose?
  - (3) Exceptionally Well: The writing uses a formal style and tone that shows awareness of the audience and purpose of the task.
  - (2) Somewhat/Sometimes Well: The writing uses an inconsistent formal style and tone that shows awareness of audience or purpose.
  - (1) Not Well: The writing uses an ineffective or inappropriate tone that demonstrates limited or no awareness of audience or purpose.
  
5. How well do you choose words and use a strong vocabulary?
  - (3) Exceptionally Well: The writing includes specific, well-chosen words that help express ideas.
  - (2) Somewhat/Sometimes Well: The writing may occasionally include misused words or words that vaguely express ideas.
  - (1) Not Well: The writing includes frequent misused words, slang, or vague or repetitive language.
  
6. How could you improve in this category?

### Clarity and Command of Standard English Conventions

1. How well does your writing apply the following: good spelling, correct subject-verb agreement, correct pronoun use, good use of modifiers and word order, correct capitalization, correct use of apostrophes, and correct use of punctuation?
  - (3) Exceptionally Well: The writing correctly uses the above conventions.
  - (2) Somewhat/Sometimes Well: There may be some misuse of the above conventions.
  - (1) Not Well: There are many errors in the above conventions.
  
2. How well does your writing apply the following: correct clauses and parallel structure, good phrasing without awkwardness or wordiness, good transitions, correct sentence structures without run-ons and fragments, and good word usage?
  - (3) Exceptionally Well: The writing shows correct use of sentence structure and flows together.
  - (2) Somewhat/Sometimes Well: There may be some awkward sentences that make the meaning unclear. The writing flows well in places.
  - (1) Not Well: Sentences are consistently awkward, choppy, repetitive, or rambling, and the meaning is unclear.
  
3. How well does your writing avoid errors in mechanics and conventions?
  - (3) Exceptionally Well: There may be minor errors that do not interfere with understanding.
  - (2) Somewhat/Sometimes Well: There may be many errors in mechanics and conventions that occasionally affect understanding.
  - (1) Not Well: The writing does not demonstrate understanding of conventions and usage of language.
  
4. How could you improve in this category?

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**Developing an Organized Extended Response**

Practice It!

pages 184–187

1a.

<p><b>Central Idea:</b> Jefferson said institutions must “keep pace with the times,” and the changing times require that the Constitution be amended to limit the powers of corporations.</p>	<p><b>Details or Explanation:</b> The Founding Fathers likely never foresaw corporations would be considered as “citizens” with rights.</p>
<p><b>Supporting Idea:</b> Corporations are not citizens.</p>	<p><b>Details and Evidence:</b> “inhuman, legal entities without inherent rights” vs. “associations of citizens”</p>
	<p>The Supreme Court considers corporations “associations of citizens.” Corporations are not citizens in other ways, i.e. going to jail, voting.</p>
<p><b>Supporting idea:</b> A constitutional amendment is needed because the Supreme Court made the ruling that corporations deserve free speech.</p>	<p><b>Details and Evidence:</b> The Supreme Court rules on constitutionality, so only a constitutional amendment can counter the ruling. Jefferson: “new discoveries are made, new truths disclosed” Citizens United is a new way of looking at corporations.</p>

<p><b>Conclusion:</b> Changing the Constitution is not a light decision.</p>	<p><b>Details or Explanation:</b> Citizens United immediately/ significantly affected elections, so a constitutional amendment is worth pursuing.</p>
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1b. You might write:

Jefferson professed that institutions must “keep pace with the times,” and the changing times require that the Constitution be amended to limit the powers of corporations. Mr. Kittridge makes a strong argument that it is wrong to assign corporations rights. The Founding Fathers likely never foresaw that corporations might be considered citizens, and so a constitutional amendment is appropriate to adapt to unforeseen changes in society.

Mr. Kittridge makes the argument that corporations are not citizens and should not have rights. His position is in opposition to the Supreme Court decision that classifies corporations as “associations of citizens.” While groups of private citizens certainly have the same rights as individuals to freedom of speech and assembly, a corporation is clearly not merely a group of citizens. As Kittridge points out, a corporation is a legal entity that protects owners from business liabilities. The purpose of a corporation is to conduct business and make money, and so a corporation has self-interest to promote. However, that same corporation has no empathy, civic duty, or personal liability. Defining a corporation as an “association of citizens” with human rights is misguided at best.

A constitutional amendment is needed because the Supreme Court made the ruling that corporations deserve free speech. The Supreme Court rules on constitutionality, so clarifying the Constitution with an amendment seems the best way to counter the Citizens United decision. Jefferson said that changes in government are needed when “new discoveries are made, new truths disclosed.” Modern corporations are a new truth in society, and the government needs rules that clearly define corporations as different from individuals.

Changing the Constitution is not a light decision, and Jefferson points out that “frequent and untried” changes could be hazards to government. Citizens United immediately and significantly affected elections with an influx of financial contributions, so it requires a strong response. A constitutional amendment defining corporations as entities without rights meets Jefferson’s criteria for necessary change.

1c. When you evaluate your work, look for strong organization with supporting ideas clarified by strong details and evidence.

2a.

<p><b>Central Idea:</b> The arguments against zero-tolerance policies are stronger.</p>	<p><b>Details or Explanation:</b> Zero-tolerance policies try to eliminate problems with biased decision making or student excuses, but the problems they cause are serious.</p>
<p><b>Supporting Idea:</b> Zero-tolerance policies attempt to deal with real problems, but they cause serious issues.</p>	<p><b>Details and Evidence:</b> Witness reports are unreliable, and teachers can be biased. “Zero-tolerance” creates unfair circumstances, i.e. expulsion for minor offences. Victims may be punished along with bullies.</p>
<p><b>Supporting idea:</b> The best way of dealing with violence is not necessarily expulsion or suspension.</p>	<p><b>Details and Evidence:</b> Violence doesn’t go away when students are kicked out of school. Violence signifies emotional, psychological problems.</p>

<p><b>Conclusion:</b> The idea of the punishment fitting the crime is an important one.</p>	<p><b>Details or Explanation:</b> Treating all situations with one broad-stroke solution rarely works. Each circumstance needs an appropriate response.</p>
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2b. You might write:

It is easy to understand how a zero-tolerance policy might be appealing. Any of us might, in a moment of frustration, cry, “Why would they allow violent students in our schools?” Zero-tolerance policies attempt to increase safety and security while eliminating problems with biased decision-making. However, the arguments against such policies are stronger, since zero-tolerance policies cause unjustified results and serious problems. It is questionable whether they provide effective solutions.

Zero-tolerance policies address real issues of teacher or administrator bias, unreliable witness reports, and student lies. Addressing each conflict on its own merits is a difficult task. If punishments could be reliably automated to eliminate human error, it might be a good thing. A zero-tolerance policy, however, does not dole out punishments well. Bullied students may be punished for defending themselves or even simply for being attacked. Instances of unfair expulsion or suspension are worse than potential bias in punishment. They rob students of their education.

The best way of dealing with violence is not necessarily expulsion or suspension. As opponents of zero-tolerance policies note, violence is merely pushed out of the school instead of being properly addressed. Violence signifies emotional, psychological, social, or even physical problems. Students involved in violent instances need help more than expulsion. An important piece of evidence is missing from the proponents’ arguments for zero-tolerance policies: evidence that the policies are effective in reducing violence and improving education. On the other hand, there is evidence that students can be hurt unfairly by these policies.

The idea of the punishment fitting the crime is an important one, and treating all situations with one broad-stroke solution rarely works. Each circumstance is different and needs an appropriate response to help both the instigators and victims of violence.

- 2c. When you evaluate your work, look for strong organization, with supporting ideas clarified by strong details and evidence.

### Check Your Skills

pages 188–190

1. The following is an example of an **effective** response. It addresses and evaluates the arguments in the passage, and it has a clear position.

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Based on the positions stated in the passage, the evidence in favor of banning or regulating energy drinks is strongest because energy drinks can cause serious health problems. Those in favor of regulation have strong evidence of harmful health effects, and arguments against regulation ignore those hazards.

Serious health effects such as convulsion, anaphylactic shock, and even death have been documented by the Food and Drug Administration, a reliable source. The example of the high school student who suffered a seizure and nearly died as the result of consuming an energy drink brings this threat home. Any teen could suffer the same reaction. Can these drinks be considered safe? The additional reports of energy drinks harming pregnant women are also significant. The proponents of energy drinks categorize them as healthy, noting ingredients such as antioxidants and herbal remedies. This makes the drinks even more dangerous. Children, teens, and pregnant women are likely unaware of the risks.

The arguments against regulation in this passage fail to take into account the health risks of energy drinks. Opponents compare regulating energy drinks to anti-tobacco campaigns. Both products are harmful, and both need regulation. Both are represented by companies with a financial interest, and those companies will fight regulation on every level. Energy drink proponents state that the risk of death from an energy drink is less than risk of death from cigarettes. The argument is that energy drinks are not risky

enough to ban, but the risks the FDA has compiled include death and miscarriage. Should the “free market” be free to advertise products as healthy when they could cause death?

The controversy should not be over whether to regulate products with proven health risks. The controversy should be over how to regulate those products. At a minimum, consumers need to be aware of the risks associated with energy drinks.

The following is an example of an **ineffective** response. It does not have enough specific details and a clear progression of ideas. It does use the passage to construct an argument, but it needs better organization and clearer support. Try revising this response for extra practice.

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Energy drinks aren’t good for you, and so banning them is probably a good idea. The idea of something giving you a seizure is really bad and harmful. Companies will always want to advertise their products, and they aren’t the ones who are going to tell you that something is bad for you. Like the passage says, banning energy drinks is like banning tobacco. Maybe tobacco is worse, but both are being banned for the same reasons. Both have health hazards. Energy drinks can cause seizures, miscarriages, and death. Tobacco can cause lung cancer, emphysema, and death. Those under 18 years old shouldn’t be able to buy either one. We can trust the FDA to say what’s good for us, and it’s pretty obvious that energy drinks aren’t.

2. The following is an example of an **effective** response. It has a clear and well-supported position.

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A regulation banning energy drinks with more than 100 milligrams of caffeine per serving is beneficial because the problem with energy drinks is an excess of caffeine. A ban on excess caffeine goes to the heart of the problem, making it a better choice than a regulation preventing anyone under 18 from buying energy drinks. This type of regulation is difficult to enforce and does not address the core issue. The problems with energy drinks are better addressed by attacking the source of the problem: excessive caffeine in the drinks.

The health dangers from energy drinks are due to high levels of caffeine. The dangers aren't limited to teenagers and children. Pregnant women are at particular risk, since fetal distress syndrome and miscarriage are possible hazards. A ban on high-caffeine energy drinks would help address these significant dangers.

A regulation banning higher-caffeine energy drinks is also easier to enforce. Alcohol and cigarettes, though illegal for teens, are still accessible. Limiting caffeine levels of drinks is enforceable at the level of the manufacturer, distributor, and retailer. Businesses already must deal with regulations for safety. Adding this additional regulation is not an undue burden and benefits the health of the community.

The manufacturer is the one most responsible for the hazards of high-caffeine drinks. It makes sense to require manufacturers to reduce caffeine levels or stop selling their drinks. No consumer needs a drink with more than 100 milligrams of caffeine per serving. A ban on high-caffeine drinks is a sensible solution which addresses the cause of negative health effects from energy drinks.

The following is an example of an **ineffective** response. It does not choose a clear position, although it does address some arguments for each regulation. It needs more development and a strong central idea. This response also includes casual and indecisive language, such as "I guess." Try revising this response for extra practice.

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A regulation banning high-caffeine drinks might be a good idea, or stopping teenagers from buying high-caffeine drinks might be a good idea too. If you don't have high-caffeine drinks available to buy, you won't buy as much caffeine. But I guess you could buy a lot of drinks at once and still get a lot of caffeine. That might be kind of dangerous. If you don't let kids buy energy drinks, they wouldn't drink them. Pregnant women or adults could still have seizures, miscarriages, or other health problems from too much caffeine. That's also a problem but maybe not the one the regulations are trying to solve. If you had both regulations, then you would have less danger of people having "caffeine toxicity" like it says in the passage. I guess I would be in favor of either of the regulations being put in place.

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