# WHAT TEA SAYS AT EACH SCORE

EVERY 2026 SAMPLE PAPER AT EACH SCORE • STAAR ECR

TEA RELEASED ECR SCORING GUIDES • SPRING 2026 • GRADE 3



## SCORE 0

In this response, the writer presents a claim (“life was beter becuse thay cood be hoppy”), but it is not developed in relation to the prompt. No evidence is given, and an organizational structure is not evident. Overall, the response reflects a lack of understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 11, Response 1**

In this response, there is no clear claim. Although the writer attempts to provide an organizational structure with transitions (“one raeson,” “another reason,” “last reason”), the evidence provided is irrelevant and not related to the writing task (“in 1800 beang a cow boy was popular”). Furthermore, the expression of ideas is unclear (“parghraph 3 it kinda has all the emfo”; “peaple come from all over countrys”). Overall, the response reflects a lack of understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 11, Response 2**

## SCORE 1

In this response, the writer presents a claim (“it would be worse”), but it is not developed appropriately in response to the writing task. An introduction and conclusion are not evident, and the organizational structure is too weak to support logical development as the focus shifts abruptly from one idea to the next. The little text-based evidence is repetitious and insufficiently explained (“they had to walk more and their cattles would get stolen even more . . . they would get mad because their cattles would get stolen”; “they also walk . . . but their cows would get diseases”). The expression of ideas is vague and unclear (“they dont have to walk even more they also walk but then they ride cows now and its actually cool”), which impedes the quality and clarity of the writing. Overall, the response reflects a limited understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 12, Response 1**

In this response, the writer presents the claim that “it’s better that railroad tacks were built,” but it is not developed appropriately in response to the writing task. The limited organizational structure lacks a clear introduction but includes a minimal conclusion (“so i thick that it better that they made railroad tacks in Texas”). Ideas are loosely connected and lack transitions, resulting in a lack of focus. Evidence is insufficiently explained (“in paergapa it said cowboys could make more money on the long drive . . . it diffcult and dangerous”). The expression of ideas is ineffective, and overall, the response reflects a limited understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 13, Response 2**

## SCORE 2

In this response, the writer presents the claim that “life was better when more railroads were built in texes,” which is not fully developed. The organizational structure is limited and includes a brief introduction and an attempt at a concluding sentence. The logical development of the claim is minimal. The text-based evidence provided (“ ‘The cattlecould be sent on the train to the Northeast. This was faster and cheaper’”) is insufficiently explained to further the development of the response. The expression of ideas is ineffective (“they would put the cattle on the train so would not have to ride thereself”) and at times repetitive (“put there cattle on the train . . . The cattlecould be sent on the train . . . they would put the cattle on the train”), impeding the quality of the essay and the writer’s intended meaning. The response reflects a limited understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 14, Response 1**

In this response, the writer presents a general claim (“I think it was wors befor the 1884”), but it is not fully developed. A purposeful structure is present, including a brief introduction and a conclusion that restates the claim. Although the writer attempts to connect ideas with paragraph and sentence-to-sentence connections (“One way . . . this evedens proves,” “Another way . . . This evedens proves“), there is some repetition as well as minor confusion as the response moves from “befor the 1884” to “in 1884.” Evidence is limited, and the insufficient explanations mainly repeat the text evidence (“peple wher stilling ther catel . . . it says somtimes peple stoll ther cattel”; “the wather was not alwas good so it made it harde . . . it made the jurne longer and harder . . . it telse me that cowboys often facted bad weather”). The expression of ideas is basic. Overall, the response reflects partial understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 15, Response 2**

**Reading the chart.** Each score quotes every Organization and Development of Ideas note TEA printed beside a released sample paper at that score, word for word, with the printed page and the response number in that guide. Score 3 carries three sample papers in each guide, so it holds three notes.

# WHAT TEA SAYS AT EACH SCORE

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## SCORE 3

In this response, the writer presents a clear claim in the first sentence (“Life was better because when the railroads were built, it was much easier”), but it is not developed appropriately in response to the writing task. The organizational structure has an introduction that is limited to the claim but lacks a conclusion. Development consists of evidence that is directly cited from the selection, but the writer provides no explanation for the information. Overall, the response reflects a limited understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 16, Response 1**

The writer presents an evident claim (“Life was better for cowboys before 1884 when the railroad were populeted”), but it is only partially developed. The organizational structure is limited, with an introduction that doubles as the claim, a brief conclusion (“This is why cowboys do not like railroads”), and some evidence of connecting phrases (“parigaph 6 it said”; “This evidence shows”; “In parigraph 2,7”; “in parigraph 7”; “This is why”). The writer includes relevant text-based evidence (“this was faster and cheeper”; “railroads ment less need for cowboys”; “cowboys could make more money on the long drive”; “being a cowboy was a popular job”), but it is insufficiently explained and does not always support logical development of the writer’s claim (“This evidence shows that cowboys do not like the railroads”). The writer’s word choice is imprecise (“when the railroad were populeted,” “cowboys do not like the railroads”), and the expression of ideas is ineffective, impacting the strength and clarity of the message. Overall, the response reflects partial understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 17, Response 2**

In this response, the writer presents a clear claim that “life was probobly worse before 1884,” but it is only partially developed. The organizational structure includes an introduction, a concluding statement (“Okay i’ve given you my evedince and my opinion now do you belive me that life was worse before 1884”), and some evidence of connecting phrases (“one peice of evedince,” “Another piece of evedince”). The writer includes text-based evidence (“‘Cowboys needed a better way to move their cattle’”; “‘These journeys could take over two months’”), but it is insufficiently explained, weakening the logical development of the response, as one explanation is unclear (“this shows that they didn’t have a very good way to get around”), while the other is somewhat repetitive (“this shows that cowboys were willing to walk with cattle for two months strait”). The expression of ideas is basic, with general word choice (“didn’t have a very good way,” “it was hard”), and sentences are at times ineffective, interfering with the clarity of the message. Overall, the response reflects partial understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 18, Response 3**

## SCORE 4

The writer presents a clear claim (“Life was worse for cowboys before 1884”), which is partially developed. A purposeful structure that includes an introduction and conclusion is present. The writer separates ideas into body paragraphs, but organization is limited. The organization does not always support the logical development of the claim, and the focus may not always be easy to follow. Sentence-to-sentence connections and clarity may be lacking. The writer repeats the claim throughout the response (“This proves that life was worse for cowboys before 1884 because they had to go a long way just to get cattle, but it got better”) but insufficiently explains the connection between the repeated sentence and the text-based evidence from paragraphs 6 and 7 (“‘But the railroads ment there was less of a need for cowboys’ . . . life was worse for cowboys before 1884 because they had to go a long way just to get cattle, but it got better”). Although the writer uses text-based evidence to support the claim, the evidence is limited because it is insufficiently explained and is often repeated rather than developed. The expression of ideas is basic as the writer repeats themselves throughout and the word choice is general and imprecise at times. Overall, the response reflects partial understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 19, Response 1**

The writer presents the claim (“I belive that it was better for cowboys before 1884 because”), which is fully developed. The focus is consistent throughout, creating a response that is unified and easy to follow. The organizational structure is appropriate and effectively supports the development of the claim. The writer has a clear introduction and an effective conclusion, and the sentences, paragraphs, or ideas are logically connected in purposeful and highly effective ways. Specific and relevant text-based evidence is provided with quotations and paraphrasing and is clearly explained (“‘mid 1800s, being a cowboy was a poupular job,’ . . . there where lots of people that needed cowboys . . . that means that cowboys had lots of money they could earn”; “‘the typical long drive is a thing of the past,’ which is a bummer to cowboys . . . ‘Cowboys could make more money on the long drive’”). The expression of ideas is clear and effective. Overall, the response reflects a thorough understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 20, Response 2**

## SCORE 5

The writer presents the claim that “I think life was better because, the cowboys didn’t have to do a lot of work and were able to rest more,” which is fully developed. A purposeful structure that includes an effective introduction and conclusion is evident. The sentences, paragraphs, or ideas are logically connected in purposeful and highly effective ways. Ideas are focused and support the logical development of the claim. Specific, relevant text-based evidence is presented that is clearly explained and expanded upon (“it says, the long drive was dangerous and difficult. Cowboys often faced bad weather, and people stole their cattle . . . they were attacked by others, and cattle got diseases . . . I’m sure it was very tough for the cowboys”). Nearly all sentences are crafted to convey the writer’s ideas and contribute to the overall clarity of the response, resulting in the expression of ideas that is clear and effective. Overall, the response reflects a thorough understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 21, Response 1**

In this response, the writer presents a fully developed claim (“life was worse for cowboys before 1884”). The focus is consistent throughout, creating a response that is unified and easy to follow. A purposeful structure that includes an effective introduction and conclusion is evident. The organizational structure is appropriate and effectively supports the development of the claim. The sentences, paragraphs, or ideas are logically connected in purposeful and highly effective ways, and ideas are focused and support the logical development of the claim. Specific, relevant text-based evidence is presented that is clearly explained and expanded upon (“‘The only problem was figuring out how to get the cattle there.’ This explains that thinking about how to get the cattle there will be hard”; “‘Cowboys often faced bad weather.’ This explains that they needed to find a better way”). Most sentences are crafted to convey the writer’s ideas and contribute to the overall clarity of the claim, resulting in an expression of ideas that is clear and effective. Overall, the response reflects a thorough understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 22, Response 2**

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# WHAT TEA SAYS AT EACH SCORE

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## SCORE 0

In this response, the writer attempts to present a central idea for how the wooden animals contribute to the story (“Paragraph 2 is important to the story”), but it is unclear and not appropriately developed in response to the writing task. The response lacks focus, organization, or purposeful development. The expression of ideas is vague and ineffective (“if they didn’t include that we would not know how they look like, what are they made out of and what color are they”). Overall, the response reflects a lack of understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 10, Response 1**

In this response, the attempted central idea does not address the prompt (“like they said they used wood”). Instead, the writer presents brief instructions for “How the animals are carved.” The resulting writing lacks an evident organizational structure, and relevant text evidence is not provided. In addition, the expression of ideas is sometimes incoherent (“You can stay something sharp or pointy”). Overall, the response reflects a lack of understanding of the writing task.

**TEA p. 11, Response 2**

## SCORE 1

In this response, the writer presents a clear central idea for how the wooden animals contribute to the story (“the animals that abuelo made with wood were important in the story because that’s how you know he had experiance shaping thigs”). The response is brief and exhibits only minimal organization and focus. The writer’s use of “because” and “so” help separate ideas. However, evidence is insufficiently explained (“he had experiance shaping thigs so it would not be difficut for him to make a iceicle dove”). The expression of ideas is limited and impedes the quality of the essay. Overall, the response reflects a limited understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 12, Response 1**

In this response, the writer attempts a central idea (“they make catalina happy”), but it is not developed appropriately in response to the writing task. An organizational structure that supports logical development is not always evident, and an effective introduction and conclusion are both missing. Ideas are loosely connected with limited transitions (“so,” “and,” “but”), and the limited text-based evidence is insufficiently explained (“she wants more of them but sence thay are sort of pore thay can not buy one so her grandfather makes her one out of ice”). The expression of ideas is ineffective, as the connection between the wooden animals and their contribution to the story is not clearly explained. Overall, the response reflects a limited understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 13, Response 2**

## SCORE 2

In this response, the writer presents a central idea (“The animals carved in the story countribet to the story beacause in the story Catlina really wants a carved dove out of crystals”), but it is not developed appropriately to the writing task. The organizational structure is weak, consisting only of two sentences. The limited text evidence is insufficiently explained (“her Abuelo cant buy beacue they dont have enough money”; “that wood animals . . . helped to show why Cattlina wanted te dove”). The expression of ideas in this response is limited (“in the story Catlina really wants a carved dove . . . that wood animals in pargraph 2 helped to show why Cattlina wanted te dove”), impacting the strength and clarity of the message. Overall, the response reflects a limited understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 14, Response 1**

In this response, the writer presents a clear central idea (“how pragraph 2 connects to the whole intire story is because it tells how much catalina loves animals”), but it is only partially developed. The introduction consists only of the central idea, and the conclusion is very general. The organization is limited as the writer moves abruptly from one idea to the next (“catalina has a collection of animal statue’s”; “Catalina and Abuelo have good , realation ,ship with echother they have ,fun with echother”; “Abuelo made her a sculpcher of a Dove out of ice for her collecation of animals”) without always logically supporting or connecting to the central idea. Some ideas presented are not tied closely to the text (“catalina has a collection of animal statue’s in the barn also there are animals that like to hang out by her window”; “That Abuelo mad her when they were in the truck”). Effective development of the limited relevant evidence is disrupted by some repetition that includes references to the relationship between Abuelo and Catalina instead of focusing on the central idea (“good , realation ,ship with echother they have ,fun with echother. they are , kind and , loving”; “Abuelo is a kind grandfather”; “Catalina is a emoshunoul girl with a kind grandfather”). Overall, the response reflects partial understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 15, Response 2**

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## SCORE 3

In this response the writer presents an evident central idea (“The wood carved animals in the story goes along with the idea that she likes animals”). The organizational structure in this response is limited, but transitional phrases help connect ideas (“How that is so,” “This means that”). The writer focuses on word choice to support the central idea (“she cradled the dove also meaning that she like animals”), but the provided evidence is too repetitious (“she likes animals”; “if she didn’t like animals”; “This means that if she didn’t like animals”). The insufficient evidence results in a lack of development. Overall, the response reflects a limited understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 16, Response 1**

In this response, the writer presents a clear central idea for how the wooden animals contribute to the story (“by showing that Abuelo can carve”). The organizational structure includes a brief introduction, some evidence of transitional phrases (“I think this because”; “In paragragh 12”; “So, this is why”), and a limited conclusion. The writer includes relevant text evidence to support the central idea (“Catalina’s grandfather/Abeulo carved her wooden sculptures of squrels,bears, and deer”; “Abeulo took out of his pocket a whitting knife and began to start to scrape the iceicle”; “Abeulo scraped off the lat chips of ice off te dove’s beak”), but the development remains partial due to insufficient explanation. The expression of ideas is basic, and overall, the response reflects a partial understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 17, Response 2**

In this response, the writer presents a central idea that “paragraph 2 contrubute to the story by talking about the carved forest animals from wood and this help it because the probem is that Catalina wanted a dove . . . and the solution is that the grandpa makes a dove,” but it is only partially developed. The organizational structure is limited, with an introduction that doubles as the claim, and no clear concluding statement. The progression of ideas is not always clear or easy to follow. The writer includes text-based evidence about Catalina liking the wooden animals, but the evidence is insufficiently explained and somewhat repetitive (“we will not know . . . we will not understand”). Some ideas are loosely connected as the writer shifts from explaining Catalina’s interest in the wooden animals to discussing the ice dove solution without clearly explaining how these ideas connect to paragraph 2’s contribution. The explanation does not consistently show how the wooden animals help develop the story, weakening the logical development of the response. The expression of ideas is basic, with general and sometimes unclear wording (“this help it”; “we will not understand really about Catalina”), and sentences are at times ineffective, which interferes with clarity. Overall, the response reflects partial understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 18, Response 3**

## SCORE 4

In this response, the writer presents a vague central idea (“it says that her grandfather had carved animals from wood”), but it is partially developed. A purposeful structure that includes an introduction and conclusion is present. Ideas are connected by transitions (“That really helps . . . because,” “Therefore,” “So this is why”), but sentence-to-sentence connections and clarity may be lacking. Text evidence is limited and insufficiently explained (“without knowing how carve things, such as wood or ice, Abuelo couldn’t have carved the dove”; “paragraph 2 created a solution to the fact that Isabel wanted a crystal dove”). The expression of ideas is basic with some repetition (“the main reason to the solution,” “paragraph 2 created a solution”), and word choice is general and imprecise at times. Overall, the response reflects a partial understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 19, Response 1**

This response begins with the central idea that “Catalina likes them becuase they are special to her also her grandfather made them”. The focus is consistent throughout, creating a response that is unified and easy to follow. A purposeful structure that includes an effective introduction and conclusion is evident (“Catalina likes them becuase,” “another example”). The sentences, paragraphs, or ideas are logically connected in purposeful and highly effective ways. The writer sufficiently develops the response by paraphrasing relevant text-based evidence (“it says her pets lived in her bedroom window and her grandfather carved them out of different types of wood”) and explains “I think the carvings are special to Catalina becuase her grandfarther made them and she loves him and she is greatful to have him.” The expression of ideas is clear and effective. The writer’s word choice is specific and purposeful and enhances the response. Overall, the response reflects a thorough understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 20, Response 2**

## SCORE 5

In this response, the writer presents a clear and fully developed central idea (“it shows that she likes carvings . . . carvings are her favorite animals” and “they show that she collects carvings her Abuelo makes”). The focus is consistent throughout, creating a response that is unified and easy to follow. A purposeful structure that includes an effective introduction and conclusion is evident (“The article says,” “The selection says,” “Next,” “Because they couldn’t . . . she couldn’t,” “But when,” “Now”), and the sentences, paragraphs, or ideas are logically connected in purposeful and highly effective ways. The response includes well-chosen relevant text-based evidence that consistently supports and develops the central idea and includes clear explanations (“they went to there where crystal carvings of animals. Catalina really liked the animals. . . .The article says ‘She entered the store and ran to her favorite display. . . . There, on strings hanging from the ceiling, were a dozen, perfectly carved, crystal animals’”; “The selection says ‘Gently, Abuelo placed the ice dove in Catalina’s hands. Catalina cradled the dove. . . . Catalina loved the ice dove her grandpa made for her. Even though it wasn’t the crystal from the store”). The expression of ideas is clear and effective (“Now Catalina can add another carving to her collection (or put it in the freezer)”). Overall, the response reflects a thorough understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 22, Response 1**

In this response, the writer presents a clear central idea (“The carved wooden animals in paragraph 2 contribute to the story by revealing how she likes animals, which explains why she wanted the crystal dove”). The organizational structure is effective, with a clear introduction, logically ordered body paragraphs, and a concluding statement that reinforces the central idea. The writer uses purposeful transitions (“In paragraph 2,” “Also,” “In conclusion”) to connect ideas and support a clear progression, making the ideas easy to follow. Specific, relevant text-based evidence is provided and clearly explained (“‘cherry-colored squirrels, birch-gray deer, bears with stripes of wood grain down their rounded backs’”; “This means that Catalina cares about animals; why else would her grandpa carve such intricate little creatures”; “‘cradle the dove in her hands . . . lifted the piece into the sunlight’” . . . “This means that Catalina loves the dove because she held it gently and looked at it with wonder”). The writer also demonstrates purposeful word choice that enhances the response (“intricate little creatures,” “‘cradle the dove,’” “looked at it with wonder”) to clearly convey Catalina’s feelings and deepen the explanation. Overall, the response reflects a thorough understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 23, Response 2**

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## SCORE 0

In this response, the writer does not state a claim. Instead, a very brief summary of the actions taken by Hare to solve her problem is presented. The introduction is incomplete, and there is no conclusion, which results in a lack of organizational structure. The response also lacks purposeful development since there is no argument to support. Overall, the response reflects a lack of understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 10, Response 1**

The writer does not assert a claim as to whether Hare was right or wrong in the way she solved her problem. Instead, the prompt is repeated (“Argue wether hare is right to solve her problem in the waythat she does”), and then a summary of the action in the passage is presented. Without the inclusion of an argument or opinion, the response does not contain information that addresses the prompt in a relevant way. The expression of ideas is incoherent due to the absence of a clear message about Hare’s actions, and overall, the response reflects a lack of understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 11, Response 2**

## SCORE 1

In this response, the writer presents an evident claim (“I don’t think the hare solve her problem the right way”), but it is not developed appropriately in response to the writing task. The organizational structure includes a brief introduction and conclusion but does not always logically support the development of the claim. Evidence is present but sparse (“hare made the elephant dipp his trunk in the water making it look like the moon burst into hundreds so the hare lie and trick the elephant so he leave them alon”), and the explanation is insufficient (“if you think about it the hare was kind been seflees because the hare made have no water so her food wolud have been seff”). The expression of ideas is limited, which impedes the quality and clarity of the writing. Overall, the response reflects a limited understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 12, Response 1**

The writer presents an evident claim in the opening sentence (“Hello today im going to tell you why the hare was right to sovle her problem like that”), which serves as a brief introduction. Although a brief conclusion is also present (“And i thihk it was right for the hare to solve the problem like that. I hope you like my paper and now you know it was right for the hare to sloved his problem like that”), the organization remains minimal. Some relevant text evidence is included (“first the Elephats where trampling the burrows of the hares it states in Elephant and Hare,‘ They didn’t notice that they where trampling the burrows Hare’s friends beneath thier there juge feet’,And the Elephats crushed the grass the hares eat it states in Elephats and Hare’, The elephats enormous feet crushed many of the tender grasses that hare and her friends used for food’”) although the explanation of this evidence is insufficient. The writer’s word choice is mostly limited, which impacts the strength and clarity of the message. The response reflects a limited understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 13, Response 2**

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## SCORE 2

The writer provides a claim (“I think Hare was right to solve her problem the way she did”), but this idea is not developed appropriately in response to the writing task. An organizational structure that supports logical development is weak. The introduction is limited to the claim, and a conclusion is provided (“So in conclusion Hare was defintly right to solve her problem the way she did”). Although paraphrased text evidence is present (“eleaphant was scared and belived in the “Moon God”), explanation is insufficient. The expression of ideas is limited due to vague and limited word choices that impede the quality and clarity of the writing. The response reflects a limited understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 14, Response 1**

In this response, the writer states the claim in the opening sentence (“The hare was right to sovle her or his problem like that”), which also serves as a brief introduction. A conclusion is also present (“To sum it up this is why I think that the hare was right to her or his problem like that”). In addition to an introduction and conclusion, a purposeful organizational structure is evident but limited, as the writer presents three pieces of relevant text evidence and follows each one with brief but relevant explanations to support the claim (“Because inparagraph it says . . . This proves that”; “Secondly in prargraph 6 it says . . . this proves that”; “Lastly in paragraph 17,18 and19 it says . . . This tells that”). The writer’s word choice is general, and the resulting expression of ideas is basic. The response reflects partial understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 15, Response 2**

## SCORE 3

A relevant argument is presented with the claim that “Hare is right to solve her problem in the way that she does because Elephant had destroyed all of Hare’s food.” Organization is minimal as the writer follows up with text that supports the claim (“‘On their way,the Elephant enormous feet crushed many of the tender grass that Hare and her friends used for food’”) but there is little in the way of explanation to develop this support. The writer also includes a conclusion as a restatement of the claim. The expression of ideas is somewhat ineffective due to limited or repeated word choices. The response reflects a limited understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 16, Response 1**

The writer presents the claim that “Hare is right to solve her problem in the way that she does because when the herd of elephants came out the jungle they trampled over Hare’s friends burrows,” which also serves as an introduction. Although the final sentence could be considered a brief conclusion for the entire response, overall, there is only a limited organizational structure that is evident, including some transitions that aid in the development of the argument (“One reason,” “Another reason”). The writer provides quoted text evidence, although it is not always sufficiently explained (“‘Don’t worry,she told the other hares,I have a plan.’this evidence shows that she wants to keep them away”). In addition, the expression of ideas is basic with word choice that is mostly general (“my evidence on that is”; “she thought of a plan to keep the elephant herd away from the lake”; “so my evidence on this is that”; “this evidence shows that she wants to keep them away”). Overall, the response reflects a partial understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 17, Response 2**

In this response, the writer presents a fully developed claim supporting Hare’s method of solving her problem (“Hare is right to solve her problem in the way she does because when the Hare says she has been sent by the moon good she apears to have more athority”). A purposeful structure that includes a clear introduction and conclusion is evident. Sentences and ideas are logically connected in highly effective ways through the use of the writer’s observations (“Hare is correct to solve her situation in the way that she did because when the Hare said she was sent the the moon god it gave more power”; “Hare is right to solve he conflict in the fashion she did becuase the Hare new that there was gonna just the right condishens for her plan”), which are supported with relevant text-based evidence (“According to the text it says’ I am a loyal subject of the all-powerful moon god’”; “According to the text it says‘ A full moon was just peeking above the trees as Hare hopped to the jungle to talk to Elephant’”) that is clearly explained. The expression of ideas is clear, and most sentences are effectively crafted to convey the writer’s ideas. Overall, the response reflects a thorough understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 18, Response 3**

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## SCORE 4

The writer presents the claim that "Hare is not right for solving her problem the way she did." The focus may not always be consistent and may not always be easy to follow. An organizational structure that includes an introduction, which is limited to the claim, and a conclusion is present ("To wrap up everything that has been stated, Hare did not do the right thing to solve the problem"). Although text-based evidence is provided ("Paragraph 19 it says, 'You're right,' said Elephant, shaking with fear. 'I promise I'll never annoy the moon god again!'"; "the last sentance of paragraph 17 says, 'Elephant threw back his trunk in fright.'"), it is not sufficiently explained ("she lied about the moon god and scared the elephant from drinking the water . . . This evidence proves that Hare did the wrong thing"; "Hare frightened the elephant just to get him to stop trampling the grass and over their burrows . . . This baisically says that she frightened Elephant by having him put his trunk in to scare himself"). In addition, the expression of ideas remains basic, and the writer's word choices are mostly general and imprecise. Overall, the response reflects a partial understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 20, Response 1**

The writer presents a claim that "I beilieve Hare is right to solve her problem they way she did". The focus is consistent throughout, creating a response that is unified and easy to follow. An organizational structure is effective. The first three sentences of the response serve as the introduction and the last two sentences as the conclusion ("Nothing bad happened so everything was okay! So that is why I think the way she solved the problem the way she did was right way to do it"). The writer logically connects ideas in purposeful and effective ways, and text-based evidence is woven into a fully developed explanation for why Hare was right to solve her problem the way she did ("It may have been rude to lie but Elephant was being rude as well, like in paragraph 11 he says 'Go on, said Elephant politley, although he didn't believe a word Hare was saying.' doesn't that seem a bit rude?"; "So it's not that the plan was bad or rude it was the idea she came up with and it worked. Although she did leave Elephant in a fright"). The writer's explanations enhance the response. Almost all sentences are crafted to convey the writer's ideas and contribute to the quality of support for the claim. The expression of ideas is clear and effective. Overall, the response reflects a thorough understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 21, Response 2**

## SCORE 5

The writer presents a claim that "Hare was right to solve her problem the way she did because it was not just only her problem but her friends' too." The organization is highly effective and includes paragraphs devoted to both an introduction and a conclusion. A paragraph is devoted to each of the three reasons that Hare is right to solve her problem the way she does, and these reasons are fully developed. Transitional wording is used to connect paragraphs ("There are many things," "Another thing," "One more thing," "In conclusion"), and the writer also includes sentence-to-sentence connections to strengthen the logical progression ("According to the text," "This evidence shows that"). The writer provides specific, well chosen, and relevant quoted and paraphrased evidence that is clearly explained and consistently supports and develops the claim. The expression of ideas is clear and effective because all sentences convey the writer's ideas and contribute to the clarity of the message. Overall, this response reflects a thorough understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 22, Response 1**

The writer provides a claim that "Hare was right to trick the elephants into leaving." The focus is consistent throughout, creating a response that is unified and easy to follow. The organizational structure effectively supports the development of the claim as a brief introduction is provided ("In the story, Elephant and Hare, Hare uses trickery to keep the elephants away from the lake"), as is an effective concluding paragraph. Each of the three body paragraphs are used to effectively develop support for the claim, and transitions are used to logically connect paragraphs and sentences in purposeful ways ("The elephants are very strong"; "Therefore, Hare and her friends"; "Asking politely would clearly not convince the elphants"; "After analyzing the past two strategies"; "Hare should play to her advantages"). The writer provides relevant paraphrased text evidence that is fully developed and clearly explained. The expression of ideas is effective because the writer's word choices are specific and purposeful, and all sentences convey the writer's ideas and contribute to the clarity of the message. Overall, this response reflects a thorough understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 23, Response 2**

**Reading the chart.** Each score quotes every Organization and Development of Ideas note TEA printed beside a released sample paper at that score, word for word, with the printed page and the response number in that guide. Score 3 carries three sample papers in each guide, so it holds three notes.

# WHAT TEA SAYS AT EACH SCORE

EVERY 2026 SAMPLE PAPER AT EACH SCORE • STAAR ECR

TEA RELEASED ECR SCORING GUIDES • SPRING 2026 • GRADE 6



## SCORE 0

The writer provides a brief summarization of a small portion of the passage without including a controlling idea. An organizational structure is not evident, and the summary of the text does not function as evidence since there is no thesis to support. The expression of ideas is unclear due to a lack of engagement with how Wang Yani's life experiences are affected by her art. The response reflects a lack of understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 10, Response 1**

In this response, the writer does not provide an evident controlling idea. Although organized chronologically, the response is constructed as a summary, which is not an appropriate or effective organizational structure for the writing task. Without a controlling idea, the references to the text do not provide relevant evidence, so the response lacks development. The response reflects a lack of understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 11, Response 2**

## SCORE 1

The writer provides a controlling idea that is presented in the opening and concluding phrases of the response ("Art impacted Wang Yani life since . . . she is so talented she will be a one of a kind"). The response lacks an effective introduction and conclusion, and organization is minimal since a structure that supports logical development is not evident. The writer utilizes some paraphrased evidence that aligns with Wang's talent, but it is not sufficiently explained or developed properly to support the controlling idea ("she had made over 4,000 paintings at the age of four years old, when she was six people all over the world had seen her paintings like Japan, England and the USA"; "Wang Yani is still so young and is the best artis so far she still has a long way to go for sure"). The expression of ideas is ineffective, and the writer's word choices are limited ("many artis quite since they had been doing art for such a long time but are not as good as Wang Yani !!!"). The response reflects a limited understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 12, Response 1**

The writer provides a controlling idea that is best represented by the brief conclusion at the end of the response that states "that is what i think how art inspired her after what happend with her dad and stuff." The abrupt introduction ("I think when she saw her father or dad working she got inspired") provides weak organizational structure. Little text-based evidence is presented to support the controlling idea, and the explanation of this evidence is insufficient ("she wanted try and accidentally ruin her dad or fathers work but she created a master peice and her dads friends loved it and siad they liked her ao now i think she is a famous artis becuase of the accident that happend when she messed up her faather or her dads work"). The expression of ideas is ineffective with sentences and phrases that interfere with the writer's intended meaning and impact the strength and clarity of the message. The response reflects a limited understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 13, Response 2**

**Reading the chart.** Each score quotes every Organization and Development of Ideas note TEA printed beside a released sample paper at that score, word for word, with the printed page and the response number in that guide. Score 3 carries three sample papers in each guide, so it holds three notes.

## SCORE 2

The writer provides a controlling idea that serves as a brief introduction (“Art has impacted Young Master Yanis life massivly”). A conclusion is also present (“In conclusion Young Master Yani has gotten to experince many things in her life because of art and should encourage you to go out and be creative”). An organizational structure is evident, but instances of repetition in the evidence and insufficient explanation weaken the logical development of the controlling idea (“it has let her go around the world and experince going to places like Japan, England, Germany and the United States said in the text, ‘she has had art shows in Japan, England, Germany, and the United States. Young Master Yani has gotten to experince life in a different point of view than others . . . Young Master Yani has gotten to experince many things in her life”). The response reflects a limited understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 14, Response 1**

In this response, the writer asserts the controlling idea that “art hasimpacted wang yanis experiences in life becuase she becomes famous and well known around the world.” A purposeful organizational structure is evident as the writer includes a rhetorical question and thesis statement that serve as an introduction and a conclusion that reinforces the controlling idea (“in conslusion, art had changed Wang Yani’s life in many ways. Art can change your life too if your just try it”). However, this organizational structure is not consistent throughout and does not always support logical development. Multiple pieces of text-based evidence are utilized to support how Wang was popular all over the world (“‘ by the age of four,yani had her first painting exhibit in china’”), and the writer provides some developmental support. However, it is not always sufficiently explained. In addition, instances of repetition detract from the effectiveness of the expression of ideas. Overall, the writer demonstrates a partial understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 15, Response 2**

## SCORE 3

The writer provides the thesis in the first sentence that also serves as an introduction (“art impacted Wang Yani’s life by embracing her creativity”). A conclusion is also presented (“This shows how the people look towards Yani and how her talent at such a young age is embracing her creativity”). The organizational structure is weak and provides only minimal development. The evidence (“‘One critic who saw her paintings said,“Yani’s work is uninhibited genius. It’s almost unbelievable that a youngster did these lovely, exciting works of art’”) only vaguely supports the controlling idea. The limited expression of ideas weakens the strength of the message. The response demonstrates a limited understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 16, Response 1**

The writer presents the controlling idea that “Art has impacted Yani’s experience in life in many different ways” and further extends this idea with the concepts of Wang Yani having talent in art, becoming famous, finding her passion, and being well traveled. While there is an introduction and a brief concluding statement present (“These are some reasons why I think that art has impacted Yani’s exprience in life”), the organizational structure is not consistent and does not always support logical development of the controlling idea. Sentence-to-sentence connections and clarity are sometimes lacking. Multiple pieces of text-based evidence are presented, though there is only partial explanation beyond simply a rephrasing of this evidence. The result is an expression of the writer’s ideas that remains basic throughout the essay. The response reflects partial understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 17, Response 2**

The writer provides a controlling idea in the second sentence of the introduction (“Art has impated wang Yani’s experiences in life by giveing her a lot of opratunitys”). A purposeful structure that includes an effective introduction and conclusion (“in conclusion, becase of her skill and that she can use it as a job it has empactered her by giveing her opurotunitys for when she is adult . . . i say she is going to have a bright life for adult hood”) is evident, and two essential ideas are presented (“first is that she is good at art”; “also is that she can us this work and talent as a job for adult hood”) and developed. The writer provides relevant text evidence from the passage (“in paragraph 7 it says ‘an older chinese painter gave up bis brushes after seeing yani’s work becase he felt his work could never equal the beatuy of hers’”; “the text says ‘by the time she was four Yani had her first pinting exibit in china. by the age of six she had produced over 4000 paintings’”) and clearly explains the evidence (“This shows that she is good at art becase if a older main stops wanting to paint becase of her arts beatuy then she must be a good painter. this proves that her art can become a job she can use”; “this shows that if she got a art exibit by fou she can when she gets older us this a s a opertonity to sell them and make it into a job”). This text-based evidence and the explanations consistently support and develop the controlling idea. The sentences, paragraphs, and ideas are logically connected in purposeful ways (“first is that,” “also is that,” “in conclusion”). The expression of ideas is effective as sentences contribute to the overall quality of the response. The response reflects a thorough understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 18, Response 3**

**Reading the chart.** Each score quotes every Organization and Development of Ideas note TEA printed beside a released sample paper at that score, word for word, with the printed page and the response number in that guide. Score 3 carries three sample papers in each guide, so it holds three notes.

## SCORE 4

This response begins with a controlling idea that "Art has impacted Wang Yani's experiences in life by making it more busy." The response is organized with an introduction, some logical flow of development ("Her life is more busy because," "Yani is also busy because"), and a concluding statement ("So that is how art has impacted Wang Yani's life"). The evidence is relevant but limited ("'By the age of six, she had produced over 4,000 paintings'") and demonstrates how Wang's life could be "more busy." The explanation that "This implies that she paints alot, because Yani could have messed up and started a new one, so really she painted more than 4,000 paintings" provides some insight and support for the idea that Yani would be quite busy if she has to produce more than 4,000 paintings to have that end result. The second piece of text-based evidence ("'Since then, she has had art shows in Japan, England, Germany, and the United States'") and the development that she travels a lot for being so young are correctly paired and provide some additional support for the controlling idea of being "more busy." Overall, although the two pieces of text-based evidence are relevant and some support is provided, the response would benefit from additional explanation to fully develop support for the controlling idea. The expression of ideas is basic with some word choice providing some clarity ("how her life has been more occupied by the influence of art."). As a whole, the response reflects partial understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 20, Response 1**

The writer presents a controlling idea that "Art has impacted Wang Yani's experiences in life by giving her oppertunities to become a profesional artist and by helping her become more succesful in life". The focus is consistent throughout, creating a response that is unified and easy to follow. The first sentence that contains the controlling idea serves as an introduction, and the final paragraph is an effective conclusion. An organizational structure is evident as the writer devotes a paragraph to each of the ideas presented in the controlling idea ("Firstly, Art has impacted Wang Yani's life experience in life by giving her oppertunities to become a profesional artist"; "Additionally, Art has impacted Wang Yani's expiriences in life by helping her become more succesful in life"). Relevant text-based evidence is included to support the idea of becoming a professional artist ("in paragraph 5 the text says, 'But when her father showed the painting to his friends in their village of Gongchen, China they all agreed the young girls art work absolutely amazing!'") as well as becoming more successful in life ("paragraph 11 the text says 'By the time she was four, Yani had her first exhibit in China.' And 'By the age of six, she had produced over 4,000 paintings.' 'Since then, she has had art shows in Japan, England, Germany, and the United States.'"). This evidence is clearly explained and consistently supports and develops the controlling idea. The expression of ideas is clear and effective. Additionally, the writer's word choices are purposeful, and almost all sentences and phrases are effectively crafted to convey the writer's ideas. The response reflects a thorough understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 21, Response 2**

## SCORE 5

The writer introduces the controlling idea that "art had a huge impact in Wang Yani's experiences in life. Being inspired by her fathers art work she wanted to paint, and in that moment had just found her future" in the introductory paragraph. The response is effectively organized, featuring an introduction, conclusion, logical presentation of supporting concepts, and appropriate sentence-to-sentence connections. The writer begins by paraphrasing the events surrounding how Yani's relationship with art begins, which is exemplified by the inspiration from her father. The controlling idea is further developed with the inclusion of relevant text-based evidence pointing to events surrounding the actual talent Yani has in xieyi painting. Finally, the writer includes the greater impact art has on Yani, which is producing so many paintings that are seen across so many places. The evidence is relevant, well chosen, and thoroughly explained. In addition, the writer's specific and purposeful word choices strengthen the expression of ideas. The expression of ideas is clear and effective. Overall, the writer demonstrates a clear and thorough understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 23, Response 1**

The writer provides a controlling idea that "By the age of 6, she has done things most people don't have the chance to do in their lifetime!". The focus is consistent throughout with a strong introduction and conclusion, creating a response that effectively supports the development of the thesis, and is unified and easy to follow. The sentences, paragraphs, and ideas are logically connected. The response includes relevant text-based evidence and clearly explains how her artistic talent impacts the different experiences available to Wang Yani to consistently support and develop the controlling idea. The expression of ideas is clear and effective. The rhetorical question in the second paragraph ("Could you imagine your kids being just four years old and having a whole exhibit filled with their own paintings !?!") amplifies the expression of ideas. The response reflects a thorough understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 24, Response 2**

**Reading the chart.** Each score quotes every Organization and Development of Ideas note TEA printed beside a released sample paper at that score, word for word, with the printed page and the response number in that guide. Score 3 carries three sample papers in each guide, so it holds three notes.

# WHAT TEA SAYS AT EACH SCORE

EVERY 2026 SAMPLE PAPER AT EACH SCORE • STAAR ECR

TEA RELEASED ECR SCORING GUIDES • SPRING 2026 • GRADE 7



## SCORE 0

The writer does not provide a thesis to explain the effects of the safety measures Strauss put in place but rather a list of safety measures (“put a net,” “use hard hats,” “use mask”). An organizational structure is not evident, as the response lacks an introduction and a conclusion. With no evident thesis in the response and no explanations offered, the text references do not constitute relevant evidence. Expression of ideas is unclear. Overall, the response reflects a lack of understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 11, Response 1**

In this response, a thesis is not evident, and only general comments are provided (“The golden gate bridge is a great piece of history”). The writer does not use a consistent or purposeful organizational structure and, instead, provides general information from the passage without addressing the prompt. There is no introduction or conclusion, and no relevant supporting evidence is provided. Overall, the response reflects a lack of understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 12, Response 2**

## SCORE 1

A thesis is provided at the beginning of the response (“the effects of Strauss effort is to keep his builders safe”), but it is not developed appropriately in response to the writing task. There is a brief, perfunctory introduction and a very limited conclusion (“So Strauss implemented these saftey rules”). An organizational structure to support logical development is not always evident. Evidence is relevant (“like when he built the a net to keep workers from falling off . . . saved 19 people”; “the respirator masks protected workers from the fumes realesed by the drill’s”; “anyone who refused to wear a hard hat was fired”), but development is insufficient as there is minimal explanation provided along with the textual details. Overall, this response reflects a limited understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 13, Response 1**

The writer provides an evident thesis (“Strauss safety measures saved a lot of people during the construction of the birdge”), but it is not fully developed in response to the writing task. The response does not have an appropriate organizational structure to support the thesis. There is no clear introduction or conclusion, and transitions are weak. The writer lists safety measures (“Strauss put out the saftey nets so if someone fell . . . they would fall in the net unharmed”; “Satrauss saftey measures saved 19 men”), but explanation of the evidence presented is insufficient and only vaguely related to the writing task. The expression of ideas is sometimes awkward or unclear. Overall, the response reflects a limited understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 14, Response 2**

**Reading the chart.** Each score quotes every Organization and Development of Ideas note TEA printed beside a released sample paper at that score, word for word, with the printed page and the response number in that guide. Score 3 carries three sample papers in each guide, so it holds three notes.

# WHAT TEA SAYS AT EACH SCORE

EVERY 2026 SAMPLE PAPER AT EACH SCORE • STAAR ECR



## SCORE 2

In this response, a thesis is evident (“The effects of the safety measures Strauss put in place durring the construction of the Golden Gate Brige was so nobody got injured or killed durring the construction”), but it is minimally developed. The response does not include a substantial introduction or conclusion, and ideas are without logical progression because of very minimal sentence-to-sentence connections. Evidence from the text is included (“‘Strauss had a sturdy net stetched from one end of the brige to the other durring the roadway construction phase’”; “‘He made hard hats madatory for the first time. He threatened to fire any worker who refused to wear one”) but not explained in relation to the thesis. The expression of ideas is limited and impedes the quality of the essay. Overall, the response demonstrates a limited understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 15, Response 1**

A thesis is presented (“During the building for the Golden Gate Bridge many feats were acomplished. For exsample the safty procuations that came along with it”), and it is partially developed. A purposeful structure that includes an introduction (opening thesis) and conclusion (“Stass has played a big role in what we call work safty he made sure that not only were his men safe but they felt safe as well”) is present. The response includes text evidence (“people had to ware hard hats and they had a net that would save them if they fell”; “If it wasent for Stauss we would praubly still have tones of people dieing every time and new building would begin”); however, the explanation of evidence is weak because it includes unrelated ideas (“entertainment at the circus,” “extrem sports”) and does not clearly connect back to the thesis. The expression of ideas is repetitive and unclear at times with informal language that interferes with understanding. Overall, the response reflects a partial understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 16, Response 2**

## SCORE 3

A thesis is present (“The safety measures helped save alot of people”) but not developed appropriately in response to the writing task. The organization is minimal but does include a brief introduction (“The safety measures put in place by Strauss had a big effect on the workers who worked there”) and conclusion (“Now these safety measures changed the way people thought about being safe at work”). The writer includes text evidence (“The article states that ‘It saved the lives of 19 men on this project alone’”) with limited explanation (“This line was talking about a net put in place to save workers who fell of the bridge during work”). Word choice and sentence-to-sentence connections are basic, somewhat formulaic, and repetitive at times (“The safety measures,” “The safety measures,” “The article states,” “This line was”). Overall, the response reflects a limited understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 17, Response 1**

A thesis is presented (“For one it has changed our safty regulations in work by a lot”), and it is partially developed. There is a purposeful organizational structure that includes an introduction (“The Golden Gate Bridge has change our world more than we know it”) and a conclusion that points out the effectiveness of Strauss’s safety measures (“it saved a total of 19 men’s lives”). Sentence-to-sentence connections and clarity are lacking at times. The response includes text evidence to support the thesis (“Workers were forced to were hard hats while anyone who refused were threated with being fired”; “bridgemen installing rivets also wore respirator masks to protect themselves fro harmful fumes caused by the drills”; “There was also a sturdy net underneath the workers”), but it is insufficiently explained. The expression of ideas is sometimes general or imprecise. Overall, this response reflects partial understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 18, Response 2**

The writer provides a clear and fully developed controlling idea that Joseph Strauss ”implamented some safty procotions” to protect workers during the construction of the Golden Gate Bridge. A purposeful structure that includes an introduction (“Joseph strauss implamented some safty procotions to keep everone safe”) and a conclusion (“all of these safty procautions . . . helped him and his workers”) is present and supports the development of the controlling idea. The response is logically connected and focused on worker safety throughout. Relevant and sufficient text-based evidence supports the controlling idea, including that the bridge “‘stands 746 feet high ’,” that Strauss “haf a sturdy net stretched from one end of the bridge to the other,” and that he “made hard hats mandatory for the first time ’.” The writer explains how these safety measures protected workers by stating the net “provented people from falling in to the really deep water” and that hard hats protected workers from “something to fall on your head during construction.” The inclusion of the detail that the net “saved the lives of 19 men on this project alone” further strengthens the response and enhances the explanation of how Strauss improved worker safety. Overall, the response reflects a thorough understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 20, Response 3**

**Reading the chart.** Each score quotes every Organization and Development of Ideas note TEA printed beside a released sample paper at that score, word for word, with the printed page and the response number in that guide. Score 3 carries three sample papers in each guide, so it holds three notes.

## SCORE 4

This response begins with a controlling idea that "Joseph Strauss put in place a number of safety precautions to protect the workers building the Golden Gate Bridge," and it is partially developed. A purposeful organizational structure that supports the logical development of the controlling idea is present, and it includes an introduction and a conclusion ("This shows that Joseph Strauss cares about the workers who built the bridge a lot"). The response includes text evidence with minimal explanation to show the effects of their implementation ("Strauss made the wearing of hard hats mandatory, and threatened to fire anyone who refused to wear one"; "Strauss implemented was the large, sturdy net that saved anyone who fell of the bridge while working's lives"). Expression of ideas is basic, and the writer's word choice is general. Overall, the response reflects a partial understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 21, Response 1**

The response provides a controlling idea that is fully developed ("Why he spent so much time on making them wear saftey equitment is because they were high up in the air and he didnt want anything to happen to him"). The organizational structure is appropriate and effectively supports the development of the controlling idea. The introduction provides context ("In this article Building the golden gate bridge strause put a lot of hard work into making the workers wear saftey gear when building the bridge"), and the conclusion ties ideas together by emphasizing the positive outcome ("In the end it all ended up working out and a bunch of lives where saved"). The ideas are logically connected in purposeful and highly effective ways. The body of the response elaborates on specific measures including hard hats, a sturdy net, and respirator masks. The response includes relevant text-based evidence that is clearly explained ("so if they had something drop on their heads it wouldn't damage their brain too much"; "so that if they fell by any chance there could be a net to catch them"). The second part of the response reinforces the impact of these measures by noting that they saved lives and changed workers' attitudes toward safety ("They probally didnt think that it was gonna save a lot of peoples life on this one project alone"). The expression of ideas is clear and effective. Overall, the response reflects a thorough understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 23, Response 2**

## SCORE 5

In this response, the writer provides a controlling idea that "When Strauss was building the Golden Gate Bridge he was implementing many safety measures . . . that had never been seen before in the United States", and it is fully developed. A purposeful structure that includes an effective introduction and conclusion ("The Golden Gate bridge had a big impact on safety measures not only for bridges but for all types of construction projects") is evident. The response includes relevant text-based evidence that the writer clearly explains that Strauss made helmets mandatory and threatened to fire workers who refused, noting that this "affected the workplace and made it more safer at a time when dangerous working conditions were normal." The response also includes another safety measure ("The net saved nineteen lives during just the roadway construction phase alone"). The expression of ideas is clear and effective. Almost all sentences and phrases are effectively crafted to convey the writer's ideas and contribute to the overall quality of the response and the clarity of the message. Overall, the response reflects a thorough understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 24, Response 1**

The writer provides a controlling idea that "It's construction changed some safety processes exist today that didn't back then", and it is fully developed. A purposeful structure that includes a meaningful introduction ("The Golden Gate Bridge is a historic brige located in the state of California") and conclusion ("These safety measures had a great effect on the construction workers because, with them,workers have the oppurtunity to see a new tomorrow") is present. The response includes relevant text-based evidence that is clearly explained and consistently supports and develops the controlling idea. The first paragraph explains past conditions ("'People accepted that dangerous working conditions were a part if large-scale building projects'"), and the second elaborates on specific safety measures Strauss implemented ("Strauss made his workers wear hard hats and would threatened to fire them if they didn't"; "bridgemen installing rivets also wore respirator masks"; "Strauss had a sturdy net stretched from one end of the bridge to another just in case a worker fell"). These details are relevant and strengthen the explanation of how safety improved. Expression of ideas is clear and effective, and the writer's word choice is specific and purposeful. Overall, the response reflects a thorough understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 25, Response 2**

**Reading the chart.** Each score quotes every Organization and Development of Ideas note TEA printed beside a released sample paper at that score, word for word, with the printed page and the response number in that guide. Score 3 carries three sample papers in each guide, so it holds three notes.

# WHAT TEA SAYS AT EACH SCORE

EVERY 2026 SAMPLE PAPER AT EACH SCORE • STAAR ECR

TEA RELEASED ECR SCORING GUIDES • SPRING 2026 • GRADE 8



## SCORE 0

The writer does not offer a claim in response to the prompt, which requires comparing Maglev to traditional trains. Instead, the writer offers comments about trains in general versus all other types of transportation (“i wouldnt say trains are the best type of transportation because most likely trains can break down or something can heppen while on the tracks”). The writing is mainly organized as a list rather than an argumentative response. The writer does not mention Maglev trains at all. Evidence is irrelevant because an argument is not evident. Expression of ideas is often unclear (“trains are mainly made of science and engineer supplies”). The response reflects a lack of understanding of the argumentative writing purpose.

**TEA p. 12, Response 1**

In this response, no claim is present. The writing only provides a summary of the features of the Maglev train (“In the story of how maglev trains work . . . The story is telling us how the trains work and what type of things they use to make those type of trains”). This organizational structure of summarized information does not contribute to an argumentative response. Text evidence is irrelevant because no opinion is offered for the evidence to support. Overall, the response reflects a lack of understanding of the argumentative writing purpose.

**TEA p. 13, Response 2**

## SCORE 1

In this response, a claim is offered (“I think the united states should start making more maglev trains and the reason is because they dont use so much energy neither gasoline which causes pollution”), but it is not developed. Organization is minimal, including a conclusion that is general and does not contribute a clear closing idea (“those are my reasons some people may argue or dissagree but thats why I think and want”). Ideas are not developed appropriately in response to the writing task, and support is insufficient. Little text evidence is presented, and explanations of statements made are lacking. A counterargument or rebuttal is not identified. Expression of ideas is ineffective because words and phrases are repeated (“the reason is because . . . but I have one more reason why i think they should make these . . . and the reason is”). Overall, the response reflects a limited understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 14, Response 1**

A claim is evident (“I think the united states should keep the maglev trains the friction is greatly reduced the train is much faster, smoother & the friction is greatly reduced”) but not developed appropriately in response to the writing task. A counterargument is present (“One major down side of the Maglev trains is they are very expenseive to build a one mile of guideway will cost around 50-200million dollars”) but not specifically refuted. Organization is weak with a one-sentence conclusion, no introduction, and no logical development structure. Evidence is relevant to the claim but insufficient. Text evidence is presented in the form of a quote and then additional paraphrased evidence. Despite this relevant evidence, there is no explanation. Expression of ideas is ineffective. Word choices are vague, limited, and repetitive (“the friction is greatly reduced . . . & the friction is greatly reduced”), impeding the clarity of the essay. Overall, the response reflects a limited understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 15, Response 2**

**Reading the chart.** Each score quotes every Organization and Development of Ideas note TEA printed beside a released sample paper at that score, word for word, with the printed page and the response number in that guide. Score 3 carries three sample papers in each guide, so it holds three notes.

# WHAT TEA SAYS AT EACH SCORE

EVERY 2026 SAMPLE PAPER AT EACH SCORE • STAAR ECR



## SCORE 2

In this response, the writer offers an evident claim (“I think that the United States should have an investment in Maglev trains”). Ideas are not developed appropriately in response to the writing task. A counterargument or rebuttal is not present. Organization is weak, as the introductory sentence and conclusion are formulaic. Evidence is provided (“This proves that a lot of fuel is going to the a lot of trains, but Maglev Traines ues Magnetic Levitation it does not ues any fuel at all which is better for the environment”), but any explanation of it is minimal. Expression of ideas is limited, impeding the clarity of the essay. Overall, the response reflects a limited understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 16, Response 1**

An evident claim is offered in the second paragraph and partially developed (“in my personal opionion i think that the united states should try out maglev trains”). No counterargument is identified in the response. Organization is limited as there is no introduction present, and sentence-to-sentence connections are lacking. The conclusion adequately restates the argument (“marglev trains work smoother and better bacuse they are more faster and dont have a lot of probplems as the other trains”). Support focuses primarily on the fact that “‘most trains in the united states . . . are noisy.’” Text evidence supports the argument for maglev trains (“‘they can reach speeds of 400 miles per hour aside from going fast, these trains are smoother,quieter, and use about 30% less energy’”) with partial explanation of the cited text. Expression of ideas is basic and consists mostly of paraphrased or quoted text. Overall, the response reflects a partial understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 17, Response 2**

## SCORE 3

A claim is presented at the response’s conclusion (“I totally agree that we should start building these trains more”). Organization is generally weak for the task, as the writing moves from being in favor of Maglev trains to raising the concern of high costs against Maglev trains and back. The writer provides a simple compare-and-contrast organizational structure; therefore, it is a weak argument with limited effectiveness as the writer does not offer a strong opinion. Text evidence is offered in paraphrased form, but the writer offers limited explanation. The expression of ideas is often ineffective and interferes with the writer’s intended meaning because of limited word choice. Overall, the response reflects a limited understanding of the argumentative writing purpose.

**TEA p. 18, Response 1**

The writer presents the claim that “The United States should focus on improving the train systems we already have instead of investing into maglevs to keep the United States from being out of debt.” The writer offers partial development of ideas, concentrating only on the financial aspect for persuasive purposes. The writer includes a counterargument (“even though the maglev trains are fast and are able to get you to places faster”) and then refutes it (“it would take a lot of money just to build one maglev train”). The organization includes an introductory sentence stating the opinion, a concluding statement, and paragraphing to distinguish the counterargument section. Sentence-to-sentence connections help the progression of ideas as meaningful transitional words and phrases ensure flow (“even though,” “The reason why,” “Although there are some ways”). Expression of ideas is basic, and evidence is limited in part because of redundant use of the concepts “a lot of money” or “stay out of debt” being repeated in each paragraph. Consequently, the writer does not sufficiently explain some ideas, and word choice becomes repetitive. Overall, the response reflects partial understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 19, Response 2**

The writer’s argument presents a clear claim (“since the Maglev trains are faster they could make transporting goods more efficent, and . . . you cold put them in more populated places for faster routs without desterbing the people living there”). Focus is consistent throughout (“Maglev trains arealso safer than a normal desiel and electric train because . . . use the force of friction to slow down”). A counterclaim is identified (“a disadvantage that lots bring up, for instince the Guiedway for the Maglev trains are very expensive to build since the maglevs dont run on traditional steel tracks”), and a full rebuttal paragraph is presented (“With all of the reasons not to build . . . i still think if we put in the money would could earn it back with hwo fast we could transport the good and along with the speed we could get more goods from farther away faster”). Organization provides a purposeful multi-paragraph structure that includes an introduction, conclusion, and logical progression. Ideas are fully developed with sufficient evidence that is text-based, well-chosen, and relevant. The response reflects a thorough understanding of the argumentative writing purpose.

**TEA p. 20, Response 3**

**Reading the chart.** Each score quotes every Organization and Development of Ideas note TEA printed beside a released sample paper at that score, word for word, with the printed page and the response number in that guide. Score 3 carries three sample papers in each guide, so it holds three notes.

# WHAT TEA SAYS AT EACH SCORE

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## SCORE 4

The response begins with the claim that "I think the U.S. should invest in maglev trains", but it is only partially developed. The focus is not consistent and not easy to follow with the writer's focus shifting between the argument and the counterargument. An organizational structure is apparent, but it is not consistent and does not always support the logical development of the opinion. Sentence-to-sentence connections and clarity are lacking. The evidence mostly centers on details and data about the trains ("400 miles per hour and they are smoother"; "3.4 billion gallons of diseal"; "nearly 15 billion dollars"; "is made out of iron,nickel, or colbalt") with insufficient explanation ("This information shows why the U.S. should invest in getting a new train"). Expression of ideas is basic as word choices are imprecise and general at times. Overall, the response reflects partial understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 22, Response 1**

The response begins with the claim that "maglev trains are much faster than diesel and electric powered trains". Focus is consistent throughout ("Next, maglev trains use less energy and less fossil fules"). A counterclaim is identified ("Althought maglev trains have many advantages, they do have one large down side. These trains are extreamly expensive to build"), and a rebuttal is offered in the writer's conclusion ("Despite the disadvantage, maglev trains would be a great way to advance the tecnology in the United States and could benefit many citizens day-to-day lives"). Paragraph organization provides a purposeful structure that includes an introduction and conclusion. The paragraphs are logically connected in purposeful and highly effective ways ("So [to] start, " "Next, " "That shows"), others are meaningful and enhance understanding ("Althought, " "Despite"). Ideas are fully developed with text evidence that is well-chosen and relevant. The writer crafts sentences to convey a point of view, which contributes to the overall quality of the response and the clarity of the message. Overall, the response reflects a thorough understanding of the argumentative writing purpose.

**TEA p. 23, Response 2**

## SCORE 5

The response begins with the claim that "The United States should invest in maglev trains because they are quieter, more fuel effecient, and allow for a more comfortable ride than old diesel and electric-powered trains". Focus is consistent throughout, creating a response that is unified and easy to follow. A counterclaim is identified ("Some people might argue that maglevs are too expensive to build on a large scale"), and a rebuttal is included ("but maglev trains wouldn't need fuel, which would actually save money in the long term"). Organization provides a purposeful structure that includes an original introduction and conclusion. The paragraphs are logically connected in a purposeful and highly effective way ("First," "Maglevs are also," "Finally," "In conclusion"). Ideas are fully developed with text evidence that is well-chosen and relevant. Furthermore, the writer makes specific word choices that are purposeful in enhancing the argument. Sentences are skillfully crafted to convey the writer's point of view, contributing to the overall quality of the response and the clarity of the message ("However, maglevs use magnetism to levitate above the tracks, greatly reducing the force of friction and eliminating this screeching sound"). Overall, the response reflects a thorough understanding of the argumentative writing purpose.

**TEA p. 24, Response 1**

The response begins with the claim that "The United States should invest in Maglev trains because they are more efficient, better for the environment, and help the country grow technologically". Ideas are fully developed. Focus is consistent throughout, creating a response that is unified and easy to follow. A counterclaim is identified ("Some people might argue that the building process of replacing the diesel and electric powered trains with maglev trains all around the country would be even worse for the environment than simply sticking with diesel and electric powered trains") and refuted ("However, in the long run this wouldnt be the case. The huge construction task this would take would be gradual, not all at once, spacing out the damage done so that there is enough rest in between"). Organization is effective and uses a purposeful structure that includes an introduction ("The United States should invest in Maglev trains because they are more efficient, better for the environment, and help the country grow technologically") and conclusion ("The United States should invest in Maglev trains because of how efficient and benifitting they are for the country and world") that are not simply perfunctory but add meaning and insight. Evidence is specific and well chosen ("'In 2016, freight trains consumed about 3.4 billion gallons of diesel fuel'"). Relevant text evidence is clearly explained and focused on the support and development of the argument ("Consuming that much fuel and more every year for trains is detrimental to our environment especially when global warming is so prominent now days"). The expression of ideas is clear. Word choices are specific and purposeful and enhance the response. Almost all the sentences and phrases are effectively crafted to convey the writer's ideas and contribute to the overall quality of the response and clarity of the message. Overall, the writing reflects a thorough understanding of the argumentative writing purpose.

**TEA p. 26, Response 2**

**Reading the chart.** Each score quotes every Organization and Development of Ideas note TEA printed beside a released sample paper at that score, word for word, with the printed page and the response number in that guide. Score 3 carries three sample papers in each guide, so it holds three notes.

# WHAT TEA SAYS AT EACH SCORE

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## SCORE 0

In this response, the writer does not offer a thesis but instead provides commentary on the stage directions (“stage directions get either more complex or easier. It all depends upon the play and what the setting and plot is”). The first sentence also acts as a minimal introduction, but the writer offers no conclusion. The response shows a lack of logical development of ideas. In addition, the writer offers no specific references from the reading selection, so no text evidence is provided. The expression of ideas is frequently unclear (“a play about golder girls would’nt involve much movement”). The response reflects a lack of understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 12, Response 1**

In the beginning of this response, the writer provides the thesis that “As the play went on, the characters character development changed to be most positive.” This statement also serves as an introduction, and the last sentence serves as a vague conclusion. However, the overall organization lacks development as there is no focus on a specific character. While the writer discusses how the characters develop throughout the play (“At the beginning of the play, the characters seem to have different emotions”; “his friends were clearly jealous of him”; “At the end of the whole thing, they were coming together to practice and enjoy”), the way in which the stage directions influence these characters is not explained. The writer does not mention or refer to the stage directions in the essay, and the result is a lack of specific evidence that is relevant to the writing task. The response reflects a lack of understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 13, Response 2**

## SCORE 1

In this response, the writer provides a general thesis in the first sentence (“stage directions enthesize and help us undertand what the movment and expressions of the characters”) but does not develop the thesis appropriately. The writer provides an introduction but offers no conclusion, and the organizational structure does not result in logical development as the writing does not include effective transitions. Examples of stage directions are quoted as supporting evidence (“‘checks her phone and the looks up devastated’”; “‘he reads dramatically from his phone’”). However, the attempt to explain the stage directions is unsuccessful because the writer summarizes parts of the play as opposed to explaining how the stage directions develop a character. The writer’s word choice is sometimes limited (“kevin is a very expressing guy”). Overall, the response reflects a limited understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 14, Response 1**

The writer provides a thesis at the beginning of the response (“The stage directions on the development of a character throughout the play, is on how there mood changes how there tone sounds”) but does not develop the thesis appropriately. The response has a minimal introduction but no conclusion, and the overall organizational structure does not contribute to logical development. Evidence from the play is included (“An example is on Soledead on line 11 on how she was devestated that the drawing submission wass earlier that morning”), but instead of developing this evidence, the writer summarizes parts of the play (“then she checked the 5 contestents . . . and she seen kevin . . . Name on the list”) and does not offer explanations. Sentences and phrases are often ineffective (“she checked the 5 contestents on who got drawed to the free throw”). Overall, the response reflects a limited understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 15, Response 2**

**Reading the chart.** Each score quotes every Organization and Development of Ideas note TEA printed beside a released sample paper at that score, word for word, with the printed page and the response number in that guide. Score 3 carries three sample papers in each guide, so it holds three notes.

# WHAT TEA SAYS AT EACH SCORE

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## SCORE 2

The writer presents an evident thesis at the beginning of the response ("The influence of the stage directions developes the main character through out the play by, making the character Kevin become more hard working") but does not develop the thesis appropriately. An organizational structure is minimal, offering an introductory thesis statement but no evident conclusion. Transitional devices are formulaic ("But," "He also," "I also think") and consequently do not contribute much to the organizational structure. The writer does provide a stage direction as text evidence ("'He trails off and then drops his head into his hands as realization hits him'") but provides insufficient explanation of how this quote develops Kevin's character. The quoted stage direction is only vaguely relevant as it does not clearly support the writer's thesis about Kevin becoming more hardworking. Overall, this response reflects a limited understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 16, Response 1**

The writer presents the thesis in the first sentence ("The stage directions influence the development of soledad by showing her difentse form [difference from] kevin and her detemantion [determination] to get the shows [shoes]"), but the thesis is only partially developed. The response has an organizational structure with a limited introduction (the thesis) and conclusion that only restates the thesis. Meaningful transitions are lacking, and the sentence-to-sentence connections are repetitive ("This shows us," "This shows her," "it shows kevin," "her resops [response] shows us," "this shows us"). The evidence is limited because it includes a mix of relevant stage directions ("Checks her phone and then looks up, devastated"; "She looks at the phone again now incredulous"; "anoyed"; "aghast") and dialogue that is not directly relevant ("That would be a totel disaster"; "hold on, dont give up so fast"). In addition, the evidence is insufficiently explained ("many difenses are shown betten soledad and kevin as they interact"; "shows us her more strate forwerd personality comperd to kevens"). Lastly, the writer's word choice is general and sometimes repetitive ("detemantion [determination]," "difentse [differences]," "this shows"). Overall, the response reflects a partial understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 17, Response 2**

## SCORE 3

The writer of this response begins with the thesis that "In the play . . . the influence of the stage direction help the development of the characters throughout the play by showing the emotions and personality of each character." The thesis statement serves as an introduction to the essay, and the last sentence is the conclusion, which is a repetition of the thesis. While the writer successfully uses stage directions from the play as evidence to support the thesis, the evidence is only minimally explained. The examples show what kind of people the characters are rather than how they develop throughout the play ("This piece of evidence shows that the character Soledad is a kind and helpful person"). The expression of ideas is mainly limited due to repetition and a lack of descriptive word choice. Overall, the response reflects a limited understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 18, Response 1**

In this response, the writer begins with the thesis that "stage directions influince Kevin by showing his emotions and having the reader make a mental image of the scene in their head" and then partially develops this idea. The organization of the essay is limited. While the writer provides an introduction, it is brief and ineffective. The conclusion is clearly present, but clarity and sentence-to-sentence connections are sometimes lacking due in part to the awkwardly inserted stage directions from the play. Evidence from the play is used to support the thesis. The writer chooses pertinent stage directions that involve Kevin to show how he has changed ("All that evidince shows how Kevin was quick to throw himself in a situation he hardly knew anything about but ended up going with it with the help of his friends [Alejandro and his older sister Soledad] in the end"). The development of Kevin is only partially explained, while the other part of the thesis, the reader making "a mental image of the scene in their head," is not supported in the essay. In addition, the expression of ideas is basic because the writer's word choice is more general and imprecise ("tends to do stuff"; "trying out this new thing he's trying out"). Overall, the response reflects a partial understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 19, Response 2**

The writer presents the thesis that the stage directions show the development of Soledad's character through her reactions to events "from being disappointed" to "being jelous" to deciding to help train Kevin "in order to get the one thing she really wants." The thesis is fully developed in an essay with a purposeful structure. The introduction effectively provides background information about the play, giving a reader context for the thesis ideas. The conclusion is also effective as it summarizes the points made by the writer. The organization of ideas is logical with three separate stages of Soledad's development ("she was devastated," "she was jelous and angery," "realized her chances werent fully gone") discussed, in turn, and transitions ("To begin with," "In addition," "Lastly," "In conclution") create connections between the paragraphs. Relevant text evidence from the stage directions in the play ("then looks up devastated," "Annoyed," "Thoughtfully") is chosen and clearly explained to show how Soledad moved from sadness and anger to formulating a plan to possibly obtain the shoes after all. The writer provides an analysis of the events and Soledad's reactions ("i can see how this charater changed and developed though the story") instead of simply summarizing them. Overall, the response reflects a thorough understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 20, Response 3**

**Reading the chart.** Each score quotes every Organization and Development of Ideas note TEA printed beside a released sample paper at that score, word for word, with the printed page and the response number in that guide. Score 3 carries three sample papers in each guide, so it holds three notes.

# WHAT TEA SAYS AT EACH SCORE

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## SCORE 4

This response begins with the thesis that "a lot of stage directions are used to convay Soledad's emotions as she finds out she wasn't chosen as one of the contestants for the free throw contest, but her brother's friend Kevin was." The thesis is present but not fully developed in response to the task, and the focus shifts from stage directions to plot summary. The organization of the essay is mostly effective, and the writer offers an introduction as well as a conclusion that both add to the effectiveness of the writing. In addition, the ideas are logically connected and easy to follow. However, the thesis is not fully developed. Evidence from the play is paraphrased to support the thesis, but the evidence mostly summarizes the play instead of explaining the development of Soledad's character. However, the writer does provide some analysis near the end ("So even though Soledad's inital response . . . is devistation and annoyance, these emotions turn into enthusiasm by the end of the story. She is willing to assist her friend in a way that benifits both of them, and believes they have a chance of winning"). The expression of ideas is basic: word choice is often general and imprecise, and some sentences and phrases are at times ineffective, which may weaken the message. Overall, the response reflects a partial understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 22, Response 1**

This response begins with the thesis that "The writer of the play 'Winning' uses stage direction in order to effectively develope the three characters." The writer crafts a purposeful organizational structure that includes an effective introduction and conclusion that add to the reader's ability to understand the writer's ideas. In addition, strong sentence-to-sentence connections enhance the writing, making the writer's ideas easy to follow. The response includes specific, well-chosen, and relevant text-based evidence that is clearly explained and consistently supports and develops the thesis ("Clearly this shows how Soledad's emotions shifted from pure dispointment to excitement after learning Kevin was a finalist. Also . . . she is estatic that someone she knows was chosen showinng that she lacks jealous and envious intentions"). The expression of ideas is clear and effective because the writer's word choice is specific and purposeful, and sentences and phrases are effectively crafted to convey the writer's ideas and contribute to the overall quality of the response and the clarity of the message. Overall, the response reflects a thorough understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 23, Response 2**

## SCORE 5

This response begins with the thesis that "The use of stage directions within Winning allows the reader to learn more about the characters' thoughts and feelings, along with their reactions to important pieces of information." The thesis is clearly identifiable and fully developed, and the focus is consistent throughout, creating a response that is unified and easy to follow. A purposeful structure that includes an effective introduction and conclusion is evident, and the organizational structure is appropriate and effectively supports the development of the thesis. The sentences, paragraphs, or ideas are logically connected in purposeful and highly effective ways, using transitions ("One of," "The next," "The beginning," "Throughout"). The writer includes specific, well-chosen, and relevant text-based evidence that is clearly explained and consistently supports and develops the thesis ("By focusing on how the characters share this moment . . . as siblings"; "The stage directions within this scene provide the perfect contrast . . . not willing to give up"). Similarly, the response also provides stage directions for Kevin and explains those as well. In addition, the expression of ideas is clear and effective through specific and purposeful word choice and phrases ("encouraging ways," "siblings," "sympathize," "perfect contrast that gives layers," "overconfident and enthusiastic," "crucial role," "layered personalities," "invoking") and sentences and phrases are effectively crafted to convey the writer's ideas and contribute to the overall quality of the response and the clarity of the message. Overall, the response reflects a thorough understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 24, Response 1**

This response begins with the thesis that "Stage directions can influence how a character develops throughout a story by showing the characters emotions, actions, and reactions"). The thesis is clear and fully developed, and the focus is consistent throughout, creating a response that is unified and easy to follow. A purposeful structure that includes an effective introduction and conclusion is evident. In addition, transitions between and within paragraphs clearly show how the ideas relate to each other. The response includes specific, well-chosen, and relevant text-based evidence that is clearly explained and consistently supports and develops the thesis ("The way a character reacts can tell you a lot about how they are feeling in any given moment . . . whenever Soledad checks her phone and is devestated that she didn't win the competition. This stage direction develops Soledad's character by showing how important the competition was to her and how she was devestated whenever she did not win"). In addition, the expression of ideas is clear and effective. Word choice is specific ("The catch is," "plays would fall flat"), and almost all the writing contributes to the quality of the response and the clarity of the message. Overall, the response reflects a thorough understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 26, Response 2**

**Reading the chart.** Each score quotes every Organization and Development of Ideas note TEA printed beside a released sample paper at that score, word for word, with the printed page and the response number in that guide. Score 3 carries three sample papers in each guide, so it holds three notes.

# WHAT TEA SAYS AT EACH SCORE

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## SCORE 0

The writer presents a thesis that the author, Ruskin Bond, “uses langueage throught the excerpt by building suspence and showingt the birds that led him to the leopard again.” An organizational structure is not evident because the response is limited to only a thesis statement. Although a connection is proposed between the use of language and the creation of suspense, the writer offers no text-based evidence to support this idea. The vague idea that Bond built suspense by showing the birds that led him to the leopard is not explained. The overall expression of ideas is unclear, and the response reflects a lack of understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 11, Response 1**

The writer does not provide a clear thesis but rather begins with a vague statement (“The author speaks on how the animals treat him”). Starting with the second sentence, the response is a summary of the story, which results in an inappropriate organizational structure for an informational essay. The writer provides details from the story about the author’s encounters with the leopard (“the leopard disapears into the thickets”; “it made its presence know”; “the leoperd bounded away with a grunt of surprise”), but any cited text evidence does not provide relevant support because there is no attempt to address the prompt. The writer provides a description of events that led to seeing the leopard but no connection to how the author uses language to build toward the encounter. Overall, this response reflects a lack of understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 12, Response 2**

## SCORE 1

The writer presents a thesis statement that the author, Ruskin Bond, uses strong and intense language to build toward the encounter with the leopard, but this thesis is not developed appropriately. The organization of ideas is weak, and the first and last sentences function as a minimal introduction and conclusion. The conclusion is a vague summary of the analysis (“This show how from Strong leguage to intense lenguage”), and effective transitions are lacking. Quoted text evidence from paragraphs 17, 18, and 19 are provided as examples of Bond using strong and intense language, but the writer’s explanations of how these examples demonstrate that use are only vaguely related to the task (“this show how he uses that strong leguage”; “this is were he whnated to take here in surprice”; “this is were the Intence leguage”). Additionally, limited and repetitious word choices (“The author said,” “this show how,” “this is were”) weaken the effectiveness of the written expression. Overall, the response reflects a limited understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 13, Response 1**

The writer presents the thesis in the second sentence that Ruskin Bond has encountered a leopard “and he explains and useses certin language in order to create suspense and tention and gives it a more dramatic encounter.” The response is weakly organized to follow just the final paragraph of the story. The introduction uses a rhetorical question (“Have you ever . . . a leopard?”) to set up the thesis, but there is no conclusion. Support for the thesis is minimally developed with insufficient paraphrased textual evidence from paragraph 19 (“he stood up and they make eye contact”; “decides not to attack but to run away”). The explanations of how Bond seeing the leopard creates tension (“so it will be a tougher challange”) and the leopard escaping creates suspense (“curiosity of what would happen next and which one will make it out alive”) are insufficient. The writer’s word choice (“and more her more angry”; “the author makes a run for it”) sometimes weakens the clarity of the message of how Bond’s writing has an intentional effect on the reader. Overall, the expression of ideas is limited, and this response reflects a limited understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 14, Response 2**

**Reading the chart.** Each score quotes every Organization and Development of Ideas note TEA printed beside a released sample paper at that score, word for word, with the printed page and the response number in that guide. Score 3 carries three sample papers in each guide, so it holds three notes.

## SCORE 2

The writer presents the thesis that the author uses language "to add tone and mood to the text," but this thesis is not developed appropriately. The organization of ideas is weak. The first sentence functions as a perfunctory introduction, and there is no conclusion. A transitional phrase ("Another example is") is used to connect paragraphs, and while the quoted text is presented in separate paragraphs, it is not made clear whether they exemplify tone or mood or both. Quoted text evidence from paragraph 19 is provided as two examples of how the writer thinks that Bond adds tone and mood to describing the final encounter with the leopard, but the writer's explanations of how Bond's language conveys tone or mood are only vaguely related to the task ("the author enjoys bulding toward the encounter"; "its an important piece in the story"; "moslty how urgent the springs were"). Overall, the development of ideas is minimal. Additionally, limited word choice ("because its an important piece in the story"; "This qoute means a lot of things") weakens the effectiveness of the written expression. This response reflects a limited understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 15, Response 1**

The writer presents a general thesis statement that "the author uses stong language choices" in the buildup to his final encounter with the leopard, but this thesis is only partially developed. The response has a limited organizational structure that follows the chronology of the story. There is no introduction, but there is a conclusion that provides a clearer statement of the thesis ("language . . . built up the strong surpise and fear of his final encounter"). The writer presents evidence to support the thesis by including quoted text that highlights the instances in the story when Bond expresses fear or surprise along with paraphrased details of the story ("The guy later was going home . . . bright eyes staring at him"; "The guy found a area . . . to see better when he saw it"). Development is partial as the writer cites examples of how Ruskin Bond describes himself being afraid in the story, but these examples are not consistently connected to how the language choices are strong or impactful. The evidence is insufficiently explained because the writer identifies Bond's emotions ("how scary it must have been"; "he was so afraid of the leopard") but does not explain how these moments exemplify the use of strong language; the writer conveys how Bond's fear in paragraphs 6 and 10 builds up to the encounter in paragraph 19. The expression of ideas is basically clear in the effort to analyze how Bond's descriptions of his fears build an understanding for the reader of what his emotions were at the story's end. This response reflects a partial understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 16, Response 2**

## SCORE 3

The writer attempts a thesis in the first paragraph by essentially repeating the prompt ("In 'The Leopard' the author uses language to build up to the second encouter with the leopard"), but this thesis is a weak and vague presentation of a controlling idea. The organization is also weak. The introduction is ineffective as it presents vague and general ideas ("is sometimes used to build up to something"), and there is no conclusion. The second and third paragraphs are organized to separately address Ruskin Bond's use of imagery and foreshadowing, giving a minimal amount of structure to the response. The writer uses quoted text from paragraphs 6 and 8 to show examples of imagery and then quoted text from paragraph 10 as an example of foreshadowing. The accompanying explanations ("the leopard is a sneaky animal"; "aware of the leopard's presense, and it makes them nervous") are insufficient to give a reader more than a limited idea of how Bond is using language to build to the second encounter with the leopard. Word choice is limited and impedes the quality of the essay. Overall, a limited understanding of the writing purpose is demonstrated by this minimally developed analysis of the passage.

**TEA p. 17, Response 1**

A thesis is present but not clearly identifiable because the idea is divided between the introduction and conclusion. The thesis idea is that through the descriptions of animal noises and the author's actions, suspense is created in the buildup to the final encounter with the leopard. The focus of the essay is not always easy to follow. In the second and third paragraphs, the ideas are organized to follow the plot of the story, but this structure does not effectively support the logical development of ideas because the writer's intended point is sometimes unclear. In the second paragraph, the writer uses quoted text evidence and explanation to describe what happens in the story ("he hears noises from the animals . . . there might be an unwanted vistor"), but the explanation at the end of the paragraph ("this would only mark the beginning . . . they would meet again") that a future meeting has been foreshadowed is not supported by the provided evidence. Text evidence is quoted to describe what happened with the explanation that Bond is building suspense into the story ("something is about to go wrong and that there's going to be another vistor besides the birds"), and the writer's ideas become clearer but are still insufficiently explained. Overall, the development of ideas generally shows how Bond's storytelling builds up to the final encounter with the leopard but lacks examination of any specific language use. Additionally, the writer's word choice is general ("noises from the animals"; "other animals"; "noise from the animals"; "something or someone"; "something is about to go wrong") and conveys ideas imprecisely. Overall, this response reflects a partial understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 18, Response 2**

The writer presents a thesis that the author, Ruskin Bond, uses an eerie feeling and foreshadowing to build suspense into the story of his encounter with the leopard, but the thesis is only partially developed. The response has a clear structure with an introduction and a conclusion, and the ideas follow the chronological progression of the narrative, but the final encounter with the leopard is never addressed, weakening the focus. The writer includes quoted textual evidence from paragraphs 6 and 10 of the story, but the explanations ("it still causes the narrator to have a spooked feeling of what could have happen"; "forshadowing in this has the narrator in a suspesful position"; "narrator still is scared of the lepord") are insufficient to fully establish the eeriness and foreshadowing that are claimed to be key to the buildup of suspense. The written expression does not always convey the ideas clearly. Some sentences and phrases ("the author uses the language eerie"; "it still causes the narrator to have a spooked feeling of what could have happen if the narrator later on didn't scare the lepord"; "makes tge narrator relived from the interaction of the eyes misinterpret") interfere with the intended meaning and reduce the clarity of the message. Overall, this response reflects a partial understanding of the writing task.

**TEA p. 20, Response 3**

**Reading the chart.** Each score quotes every Organization and Development of Ideas note TEA printed beside a released sample paper at that score, word for word, with the printed page and the response number in that guide. Score 3 carries three sample papers in each guide, so it holds three notes.

## SCORE 4

The response begins with the thesis that the author, Ruskin Bond, uses "strong imagery as well as similes to describe the events leading up to the encounter" with the leopard in paragraph 19. The thesis is present but partially developed, and the focus may not always be consistent. The essay has a purposeful structure that includes an introduction and a conclusion, but those are more perfunctory than effective because they simply state and reiterate the thesis. However, the organization is limited because the structure may not always support the logical development of the thesis. In the second paragraph, the writer presents a piece of quoted text ("'scuffled and wrestled like boys'") that is evidence of Bond using a simile "to describe the behavior of the wildlife." In the third paragraph, evidence of figurative language ("'decorated myself with bracken fronds'") or imagery is quoted "to illustrate the author's interactions with his surroundings." The response includes some text-based evidence, but the explanations of the evidence in both paragraphs are insufficient because it is not clear how the similes and imagery build toward the encounter in paragraph 19 or contribute to the effectiveness of the story. The explanations of the evidence in both paragraphs are insufficient because it is not clear how similes and imagery build toward the paragraph 19 encounter with the leopard or contribute to the effectiveness of the story. Nevertheless, the writer does show a better-than-limited understanding of a literary analysis by attempting to examine Bond's use of literary devices in the story, even if that examination is not fully developed. Additionally, the expression of ideas is basic, and the writer uses some more specific word choices appropriate to the task ("imagery," "similes," "convey," "Figurative language," "illustrate," "context"). In the end, this response reflects a partial understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 21, Response 1**

This response begins with the thesis that the author, Ruskin Bond, uses language in the story in three ways "providing animals noise in the background, relating personal experience, and showing how his actions affect the way the environment responded". The focus is consistent throughout, creating a response that is unified and easy to follow. A purposeful structure that includes an effective introduction and conclusion is evident, and the organizational structure is appropriate and effectively supports the development of the thesis as the writer addresses each of the three thesis ideas in turn but also has an overall connecting theme of how Bond is relating to nature. The writer includes a conclusion ("he understand the approach needed to form a connective bond and not compeletly set the wild life off balance"). The response includes specific, well-chosen, and relevant text-based evidence that is clearly explained and consistently supports and develops the thesis. The writer fully develops and supports the thesis with relevant, quoted text evidence and clear explanations. In the second paragraph, the writer explains how Bond is becoming familiar with all the animal sounds in the forest ("'I heard the cry of the barking deer'"). In the third paragraph, the writer explains how Bond is making a personal connection with his surroundings ("can make a connection with the animals in the forest by the way they walk"). And in the fourth paragraph, the writer explains how Bond can influence animals ("'I clapped my hands sharply, the leopard sprang away'"). The overall effect is a clear analysis of how Ruskin Bond uses language to help readers become immersed in the story and appreciate "the importance of living creatures and their ecosystem." The expression of ideas is clear and effective because the writer's word choice is specific and purposeful, and sentences and phrases are effectively crafted to convey the writer's ideas and contribute to the overall quality of the response and the clarity of the message. With the strengths shown in organizing and developing ideas that respond well to the task, this essay reflects a thorough understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 23, Response 2**

## SCORE 5

This response begins with the thesis that "to the climax of the plot . . . by creating a sense of familiarity and suspense." The introduction and conclusion are more effective than those that simply state and reiterate the thesis because they bring the reader into and out of the essay with a sense of completeness. The organization within the second and third paragraphs is logical. Transitions aid the reader and make the analysis easy to follow ("Later, though"; "In paragraph 4"; "This indicates"; "Again in paragraph 4"; "For example"; "This shows"; "At this point"; "All in all"). Support for the thesis is fully developed in the second and third paragraphs. The writer cites four pieces of well-chosen, relevant text from paragraphs 4 through 6 of the story that clearly show how Ruskin Bond became familiar to the animals in the forest, and then how suspense was created by the chattering "'langoors'" alerting him to an unknown danger. The explanations of the evidence are sufficiently elaborate to clearly show how the evidence connects back to the thesis ideas of creating familiarity and then building suspense around an unknown threat. Additionally, the writer presents a well-written essay. The expression of ideas is clear and effective because word choices ("the climax of the plot"; "a particular animal"; "habitat"; "usually alarmed"; "residing by the stream"), interesting phrasing ("he has not met before in the familiar stream"; "the animals weren't always inviting"; "this time, another visitor had arrived"; "Starting off as strangers, Bond was able to build a connection"), and well-crafted sentences enhance the quality of the response. Even though the writer focuses on Bond's first encounter with the leopard rather than the one in paragraph 19, the other strengths of the response are enough to offset that miscue. Overall, this response reflects a thorough understanding of the writing purpose.

**TEA p. 25, Response 1**

This response begins with the thesis that the author builds up to the final encounter with the leopard by using language that is "curiously observant and suspenseful." The two ideas in the thesis are fully developed with a thorough examination of Ruskin Bond's two encounters with the leopard in the story. The essay has a clear organizational structure with an especially effective conclusion that both summarizes the previous ideas and briefly discusses how Bond's use of language affects the reader. Transitions are employed throughout the writing to connect ideas and create a logical flow ("Although"; "While the"; "This further makes"; "Because . . . it is clear that"; "To pair with"; "Since"; "An example of this is"; "so much so that"; "Right after this"). Quoted text is used sparsely but effectively by being embedded in the writer's explanations of how Bond uses language. The explanations are fully developed and show complete understanding of the task. In the second paragraph, the writer explains how the surprising encounter with the leopard in paragraph 6 creates suspense in the story ("makes the reader think about the leopard's intentions and what it will do"), and how Bond assures that the leopard will make a return appearance. In the third paragraph, the writer explains how Bond's own descriptions of his curiosity build up to the climax. Bond is not searching for the leopard but rather has "summoned [his] reserves of patience" to observe a bird's home, but when he tries to surprise the bird, he is surprised by the leopard. The writer's analysis shows insight into how Bond has constructed his story and uses language to affect the reader. Additionally, the expression of ideas is very effective. Specific and purposeful words and phrases ("extremely powerful tool"; "can sway one's perception"; "curiously observant"; "there is even more afterwards"; "its first off-putting appearance"; "reserves of patience"; "remains apparent"; "the reader craves") enhance the quality of the response. Overall, this response reflects a thorough understanding of the task and writing purpose.

**TEA p. 27, Response 2**

**Reading the chart.** Each score quotes every Organization and Development of Ideas note TEA printed beside a released sample paper at that score, word for word, with the printed page and the response number in that guide. Score 3 carries three sample papers in each guide, so it holds three notes.