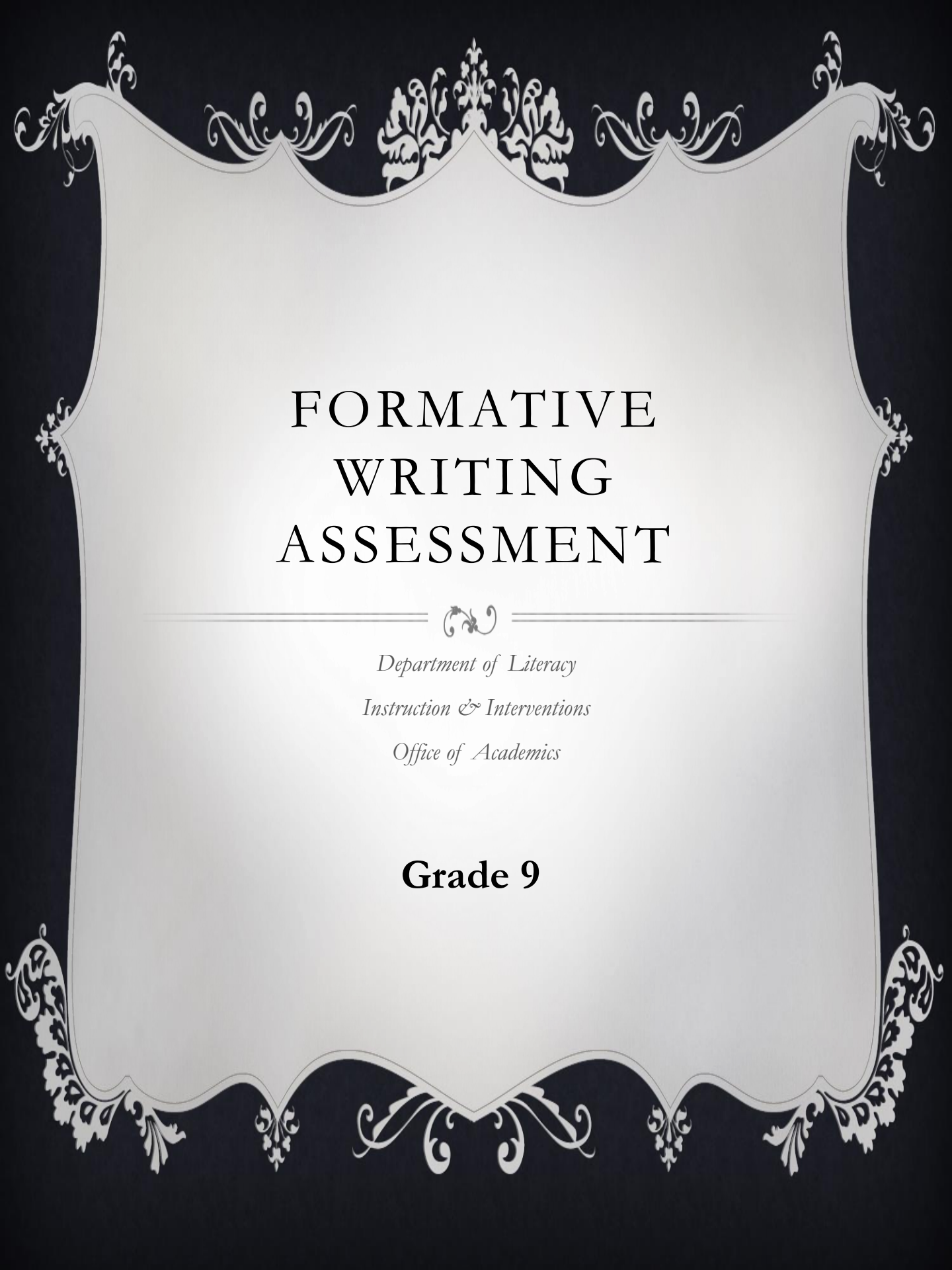




FORMATIVE WRITING ASSESSMENT

Department of Literacy
Instruction & Interventions
Office of Academics

Grade 9

Text-Based Writing Prompts:

Administration and Scoring Guidelines

Teacher Directions:

Students will read a stimulus about a single topic. A stimulus consists of several texts written on a single topic. The stimulus may include informational or literary fiction or nonfiction texts and can cover a wide array of topics. After reading the stimulus, the students will respond to a writing prompt in which they will provide information on a topic, develop a narrative, or take a stance to support an opinion or argument. Students will be required to synthesize information from the text sets and must cite specific evidence from the texts to support their ideas. Students' informative/explanatory responses should demonstrate a developed and supported controlling idea. Students' opinion/argumentative responses should support an opinion/argument using ideas presented in the stimulus. Students will have 90 minutes to read the passages, and plan, write, revise and edit their essay. **Students should read the prompt first.** They should be encouraged to highlight, underline, and take notes to support the planning process.

Scoring:

The attached text-based rubric should be used to score student responses. While the total possible points on the rubric is ten, it is recommended that three individual scores be given—one score for each of the three domains on the rubric. This will allow the teacher to determine specific areas of need within individual student responses, thus allowing for differentiation in the writing instruction that follows these formative writing tasks. The three domains are: Purpose, Focus, Organization (PFO), Evidence and Elaboration (EE), and Conventions of Standard English (CSE). Teachers should score **holistically** within each domain—PFO (4-points), EE (4-points), and CSE (2-points).

Each level of scoring within a domain is based on the overarching statement for the score found in the rubric. For example, on the grades 6-11 rubric for argumentation, the overarching statement for a score of 4 in the Purpose, Focus, Organization domain is, "The response is fully sustained and consistently focused within the purpose, audience, and task; and it has a clear and effective organizational structure creating coherence and completeness." The bulleted points that follow the statement must be considered as factors in the scoring, but should not be utilized as a checklist. Most, but not all, of the bulleted points will be evident in the student writing for a score at a specific level.

Teachers should keep in mind that a score of 3 on the rubric for a domain signals student proficiency in the addressed writing standard with a score of 4 representing mastery. In the CSE domain, a score of two represents student proficiency in the standard.

Ninth Grade: Informative Prompt #1

Write an informative essay that discusses why the societies in the following articles were influential in both the past and the present. Include evidence from what you have read.

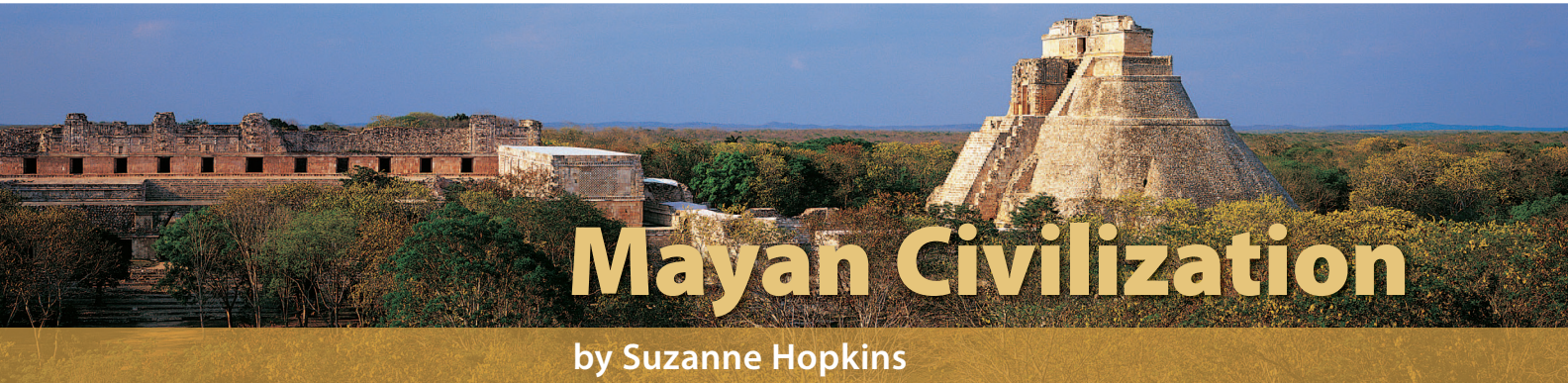
Manage your time carefully so that you can:

- Read the passages
- Plan your essay
- Write your essay
- Revise and edit your essay

Your written response should be in the form of a multi-paragraph essay. Remember to spend time reading, planning, writing, revising, and editing.

Part 1: Read Sources

Source 1: Informative Article



AS YOU READ Identify key terms that you might want to use in your essay.

NOTES

Long before the rise of the Inca and Aztec Empires, Mayan civilization flourished in Central America. The Maya first settled in the region as early as 1500 BC, growing maize and living in small agricultural communities. But by about AD 200, these villages were becoming cities. At its height, Mayan civilization included more than 40 cities, each with a population of 5,000 to 50,000 people. The cities had huge stone buildings, including palaces, pyramids, and temples. Each city-state was ruled by a king.

Mayan Society

Mayan society was hierarchical, divided by both class and profession. Below the king was a class of nobles; a middle class was composed of priests and commoners; at the lowest level were slaves.

The Maya were never an empire. Although the cities shared the same culture, each operated independently. They traded goods with each other, including salt, shells, cotton, corn, rubber, incense, feathers, jade, flint, obsidian, and granite were carried in huge dugout canoes along rivers and around coasts. They also fought wars, but these were on a small scale, one city against another.

A Time of Prosperity

For many centuries, the Maya prospered. They studied the stars and developed sophisticated and accurate calendars; practiced elaborate (if gory) religious rituals and worshiped a crowded pantheon of gods and goddesses; they developed complex hieroglyphic writing that they

30

used to record historical and religious events; they had a mathematical system based on the unit 20. Their craftsmen and artists produced fine goods made of cotton, feathers, clay, wood, and precious metals and stones, among other materials.

Decline

Yet by AD 800, Mayan civilization was in decline. While the reasons are not fully understood, archaeologists believe that the cities had grown so large, there were not enough farmers left to supply them with food. In addition, the farmland was becoming overused, the soil depleted. Food production plummeted, and famine forced people to leave the urban centers.

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By AD 950, the great Mayan cities were mostly abandoned, the population dispersed into small agricultural villages. The jungle swallowed up the empty cities. The Mayan people, however, were still around when the Spanish conquistadors arrived. And they are still around today.

Though the Spanish conquered the Maya in the mid-1500s and founded cities on Mayan lands, temples and monuments remain as a testimony to the Mayans' achievements. These structures attract tourists from around the world, ensuring that the Maya will never be forgotten.

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Source 2: Informative Article



AS YOU READ Identify details that support the main idea.

NOTES

Long ago, around AD 1345, a group of people in central Mexico wandered in search of a new home. These people were the Aztecs, and Aztec legend says that a prophesy led them to a group of islands on Lake Texcoco, in the Valley of Mexico. Their settlement would eventually become the great city Tenochtitlán.

As the last to arrive, the Aztec were at first ruled over by more powerful city-states in the area. But, after making alliances with some of these city-states, the Aztecs were able to defeat their overlords in 1428. Soon they began conquering other tribes across Mexico, and
10 Tenochtitlán became the center of a powerful Aztec empire.

The Great City

At its height in 1519, the city covered about five square miles and had between 250 and 400 thousand inhabitants. It had temples, palaces, a great market, houses, and gardens. Although the city was built on a swamp, the Aztecs were able to adapt. They traveled around and through Tenochtitlán by canoe. Several raised causeways connected the island city to the mainland. They farmed special plots of land called chinampas (also known as “floating gardens”)—raised areas of land built in the lake, separated by canals, where they grew maize and other crops.

20 Building cities was not the Aztecs’ only accomplishment. They used picture writing to record political and religious history; they used calendars and had a mathematical system based on the number 20. They wove cotton cloth, made pottery, carved in stone and other materials, made musical instruments and elaborate costumes of feathers.

A Hierarchical Society

40 Aztec society was strictly hierarchical, ruled over by a godlike emperor. Religion was an important part of everyday life, and a gory one, as they believed that human sacrifice was needed to keep the sun alive. The Aztec were harsh rulers; they demanded high tributes and were constantly fighting in order to keep up a steady supply of captives to use as human sacrifice. The harsh way they ruled their empire helped to undermine them in the end.

Decline

In 1519, Hernán Cortés and his army arrived in Tenochtitlán. When the Spanish first saw the city, they thought they must be dreaming. It was larger and more impressive than any Spanish city of the time. Vastly outnumbered, the Spanish conquistador took the Aztec emperor Montezuma II hostage and began a siege in Tenochtitlán that the Aztec could not withstand. Within three years, and with the help of the local Indian tribes who were eager to break away from Aztec rule, Cortes was able to crush the Aztecs and bring about the complete collapse of their empire. The last Aztec emperor surrendered the city to Cortés in 1521, thus ending one of the most famous empires in history.

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Source 3: Informative Article

THE INCA

by Akbar Patel

AS YOU READ Identify topics addressed in this article that have also been addressed in the previous two.

NOTES

Sometime in the twelfth century BC, the first Inca ruler is said to have moved his tribe to what is now Cuzco, high in the Andes. Until the fourteenth century, the Inca lived there peacefully with their neighbors. But then they began a campaign of territorial expansion that would eventually make Cuzco the capital of a vast empire.

Establishing an Empire

Successive generations of Incan rulers worked to expand Incan territory through war and conquest. At its height, the Inca Empire stretched more than 2,000 miles along the west coast of South America and governed millions of people. The farthest reaches of the empire
10 were connected with well-constructed roads and strong rope bridges. An elaborate system of relay runners enabled messages to be carried 250 miles a day; runners made the 1,250-mile journey from Quito (a city in the far north) to Cuzco in just five days.

Incan society was hierarchical and highly centralized, with the god-like emperor at the top of the social pyramid, followed by provincial governors, local rulers and leaders, and finally the common people. The common people paid taxes and tributes and worked for the central government. The Inca did not have a writing system, but they were able
20 to keep track of trade goods and stockpiles with a special system of knotted strings called a quipu. Religion was an important part of life.

Economy

The Inca were farmers, growing potatoes as well as other crops, often in terraces cut into the high mountainsides. They had llamas to carry loads, for wool, and for meat. They were also skilled craftsmen, building impressive cities of stone, weaving exquisite woolen cloth, and making pottery, jewelry, and many other useful and ornamental objects.

Decline

The Spanish conquistador Francisco Pizarro arrived in Peru in 1531—a very bad time for the Inca. An emperor had died, and his two sons fought over the succession. In the ensuing war, cities were devastated, the economy was damaged, and the Inca empire was divided. Pizarro used his guns, horses, and some trickery to easily defeat the Inca. New diseases brought to the Americas by the Spanish weakened the Inca as well.

Incan civilization was wiped out, but they left behind plenty of evidence of their achievements. The Incan city of Machu Picchu, for example, was never known to the Spanish invaders, but you can visit it today.

NOTES

FINAL

English Language Arts
Text-based Writing Rubrics
Grades 6–11: Informative/Explanatory



Grades 6-11 Informative/Explanatory Text-based Writing Rubric (Score points within each domain include most of the characteristics below.)			
Score	Purpose, Focus, and Organization (4-point Rubric)	Evidence and Elaboration (4-point Rubric)	Conventions of Standard English (2-point Rubric begins at score point 2)
4	The response is fully sustained and consistently focused within the purpose, audience, and task; and it has a clear controlling idea and effective organizational structure creating coherence and completeness. The response includes most of the following: • Strongly maintained controlling idea with little or no loosely related material • Skillful use of a variety of transitional strategies to clarify the relationships between and among ideas • Logical progression of ideas from beginning to end with a satisfying introduction and conclusion • Appropriate style and objective tone established and maintained	The response provides thorough and convincing support, citing evidence for the controlling idea or main idea that includes the effective use of sources, facts, and details. The response includes most of the following: • Smoothly integrated, thorough, and relevant evidence, including precise references to sources • Effective use of a variety of elaborative techniques (including but not limited to definitions, quotations, and examples), demonstrating an understanding of the topic and text • Clear and effective expression of ideas, using precise language • Academic and domain-specific vocabulary clearly appropriate for the audience and purpose • Varied sentence structure, demonstrating language facility	
3	The response is adequately sustained and generally focused within the purpose, audience, and task; and it has a clear controlling idea and evident organizational structure with a sense of completeness. The response includes most of the following: • Maintained controlling idea, though some loosely related material may be present • Adequate use of a variety of transitional strategies to clarify the relationships between and among ideas • Adequate progression of ideas from beginning to end with a sufficient introduction and conclusion • Appropriate style and objective tone established	The response provides adequate support, citing evidence for the controlling idea or main idea that includes the use of sources, facts, and details. The response includes most of the following: • Generally integrated and relevant evidence from sources, though references may be general or imprecise • Adequate use of some elaborative techniques • Adequate expression of ideas, employing a mix of precise and general language • Domain-specific vocabulary generally appropriate for the audience and purpose • Some variation in sentence structure	
<i>Continued on the following page</i>			

FINAL ELA Text-based Writing Rubrics, Grades 6–11: Informative/Explanatory
Florida Standards Assessments

Score	Purpose, Focus, and Organization (4-point Rubric)	Evidence and Elaboration (4-point Rubric)	Conventions of Standard English (2-point Rubric)
2	The response is somewhat sustained within the purpose, audience, and task but may include loosely related or extraneous material; and it may have a controlling idea with an inconsistent organizational structure. The response may include the following: • Focused controlling idea but insufficiently sustained or unclear • Inconsistent use of transitional strategies with little variety • Uneven progression of ideas from beginning to end with an inadequate introduction or conclusion	The response provides uneven, cursory support/evidence for the controlling idea or main idea that includes partial use of sources, facts, and details. The response may include the following: • Weakly integrated evidence from sources; erratic or irrelevant references or citations • Repetitive or ineffective use of elaborative techniques • Imprecise or simplistic expression of ideas • Some use of inappropriate domain-specific vocabulary • Most sentences limited to simple constructions	The response demonstrates an adequate command of basic conventions. The response may include the following: • Some minor errors in usage but no patterns of errors • Adequate use of punctuation, capitalization, sentence formation, and spelling
1	The response is related to the topic but may demonstrate little or no awareness of the purpose, audience, and task; and it may have little or no controlling idea or discernible organizational structure. The response may include the following: • Confusing or ambiguous ideas • Few or no transitional strategies • Frequent extraneous ideas that impede understanding • Too brief to demonstrate knowledge of focus or organization	The response provides minimal support/evidence for the controlling idea or main idea, including little if any use of sources, facts, and details. The response may include the following: • Minimal, absent, erroneous, or irrelevant evidence or citations from the source material • Expression of ideas that is vague, unclear, or confusing • Limited and often inappropriate language or domain-specific vocabulary • Sentences limited to simple constructions	The response demonstrates a partial command of basic conventions. The response may include the following: • Various errors in usage • Inconsistent use of correct punctuation, capitalization, sentence formation, and spelling
0			The response demonstrates a lack of command of conventions, with frequent and severe errors often obscuring meaning.