

## **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 120 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.

## **Tenth Grade Argumentative Prompt**

Write an argumentative essay in which you argue for or against instituting stricter regulations on the use of drone attacks by the United States military. Use the information from the passages in your essay.

Manage your time carefully so that you can:

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

Be sure to:

- Include a claim
- Address counterclaims
- Use evidence from multiple sources
- Avoid overly relying on one source

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

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# Background on Drones

From ProCon.org

## What Is a Drone?

Today, companies have developed dozens of drone models ranging in size from large, solar-powered, fixed-wing aircraft to small helicopter-like devices designed to mimic hummingbirds, all with a wide range of prices and capabilities. The two most widely-used attack drones are the MQ-1 Predator (which the US military ceased purchasing in Feb. 2011) and the upgraded MQ-9 Reaper, both developed by military contractor General Atomics Aeronautical Systems. The Predator and Reaper are prized for their ability to hover thousands of feet above a target for hours and relay high-resolution live surveillance. The Predator was first deployed by NATO convoys as a surveillance and intelligence gathering tool for spotting Serbian artillery during the Bosnian war in 1995, while the Reaper was first deployed in 2007 during the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.

## CIA and JSOC Drone Operation

Drones used for strike operations abroad are flown by both civilians – intelligence officers and private contractors – in the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and experienced Air Force pilots under the military's Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC). The CIA operates on its own in Pakistan, where approximately 80% of US drone strikes have been carried out. JSOC currently has responsibility for drones in Afghanistan and Somalia, and co-responsibility with the CIA for drones in Yemen.

One set of operators works abroad handling takeoffs and landings near hidden airfields in countries such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, Niger, Ethiopia, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and Djibouti. Once the drones are aloft, controls are electronically "slewed over" to a set of "reachback operators" in the United States. Using joysticks that resemble video-game controls, the reachback operators sit next to intelligence officers and watch a live video feed from the drone's camera on large flat-screen monitors. They can turn the drone, zoom in on the landscape below, and decide whether to lock onto a target.

A stream of additional "signal intelligence," sent by the National Security Agency, provides electronic means of confirming that a target has been correctly identified. Final approval for strikes with missiles or laser-guided bombs is delegated to CIA and JSOC officials. Drone pilots are

eligible for the same combat-related medals from the Department of Defense as manned aircraft pilots.

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### **Cost of Drones**

The Pentagon operates some 7,000 drones while the CIA operates around 30, and each drone costs anywhere from \$5 million for a Predator to \$14.4 million for a Reaper. The Department of Defense's fiscal year 2012 budget estimates included nearly \$5 billion for drone research, development, and procurement (around 1% of the overall DoD budget), with additional funding that is classified.

### **The War on Terror, High Value Targets, and Signature Strikes**

After the World Trade Center was attacked on Sep. 11, 2001, the Bush administration immediately authorized the armed Predator program and the first drones arrived in Afghanistan on Oct. 7, 2001. President Bush signed a Memorandum of Notification creating a secret list of "High Value Targets" that the CIA was authorized to kill anywhere in the world without further presidential approval. The administration's first known Predator strike occurred on Feb. 4, 2002 in Afghanistan, when a CIA Predator drone fired on a group they believed included Osama bin Laden. The targets, all killed, were civilians gathering scrap metal.

Since 9/11, over 95% of all non-battlefield targeted killings have been conducted by drones. The CIA under the Bush Administration mostly engaged in "personality" strikes targeting known terrorists whose identities had been firmly established through intelligence, including visual surveillance and electronic and human intelligence.

In 2008, the CIA began a policy of "signature strikes" against targets outside of named kill lists, targeting individuals based on their "pattern of life" or their suspicious daily behavior. In Pakistan in 2009 and 2010, as many as half of the 170 strikes were classified as signature strikes. Obama ordered around 280 drone strikes in Pakistan in his first presidential term alone, nearly seven times as many as in George W. Bush's second term.

The United States operates drones with the tacit consent of the leaders of Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia, and Afghanistan. The parliaments and governing bodies of these countries, however, often issue public statements blasting the attacks, and public sentiment is strongly anti-drone.

### **Number of Strikes and Casualties**

Different sources – both private and governmental – report different numbers for the number of strikes and

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combatant and civilian deaths. According to counts from the New America Foundation, Long War Journal, and The Bureau of Investigative Journalism, around 3,500 militants in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Yemen, and Somalia have died in drone attacks. A meta-study of drone strikes concluded 8 to 17% of all people killed in drone strikes are civilians.

### **The Victims of Drones Take on Washington, D.C.**

By Medea Benjamin, Co-founder, CODEPINK: Women for Peace

Posted: 11/14/2013 7:37 pm EST Updated: 01/23/2014 6:58 pm EST

Faisal bin Ali Gaber is a soft-spoken engineer from Yemen. After he lost his cousin and brother-in-law in a drone strike in August 2012, he published an open letter to President Obama and Yemeni President Hadi. He said his brother-in-law was an imam who had strongly and publicly opposed al-Qaeda, and that his young cousin was a policeman. "Our town was no battlefield. We had no warning. Our local police were never asked to make any arrest," he wrote to the presidents. "Your silence in the face of these injustices only makes matters worse. If the strike was a mistake, the family -- like all wrongly bereaved families of this secret air war -- deserve a formal apology."

Now Faisal Gaber will get a chance to appeal directly to the American people. This weekend for the first time ever, a Yemeni delegation of drone strike victims' family members, human rights experts and grassroots leaders will be visiting Washington as part of the Global Drone Summit.

While the CIA and US military have been using lethal drones for over a decade, this will be only the second time that drone victims have gotten visas to come to the United States to tell their stories. The first visit was just a few weeks ago when, on October 29, the Rehman family -- a father with his two children -- came all the way from the Pakistani tribal territory of North Waziristan to the US Capitol to tell the heart-wrenching story of the death of the children's beloved 67-year-old grandmother. The hearing, convened by Congressman Alan Grayson, had the congressman, the translator and the public in tears. The Rehman family's story is documented in the new film *Unmanned: America's Drone Wars* by Robert Greenwald of Brave New Foundation, which was released at the time of their visit. Just as the visit and the film have put real faces on drone victims, new reports by prestigious institutions have brought the covert drone wars out of the shadows. Amnesty International issued a report on drone strikes in Pakistan. Human Rights Watch issued a report on the civilian cost of US targeted killings in Yemen, the new focal point of the US drone wars. Also just released are two UN reports: one by Christof Heyns, the UN's special rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, and the other is by Ben Emmerson, the special rapporteur on human rights and counter-terrorism. Both question the US

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legal framework in light of international law and decry the lack of transparency and accountability. The UN reports engendered the first-ever UN discussion on remote-controlled killing at the General Assembly when, on October 26, representatives from a broad swath of nations took turns denouncing US drone policies.

The US government is feeling the pressure. It has taken steps to reduce civilian casualties and has reduced the actual number of strikes, but certainly not eliminated them. In fact, there was a drone strike in Somalia on October 28, one in Pakistan on October 31, and yet another one in Yemen on November 7.

While the reduction in the number of strikes is a partial victory, it cannot erase the hundreds of innocent lives lost over the years. Also, with the global proliferation of drones (thanks to the easing of restrictions on overseas sales and the introduction of domestic drones into US skies by September 2015), their usage will inevitably increase.

That's why the Global Drone Summit on November 16-17 will bring together hundreds of people from across the US and around the world to discuss strategies to stop the proliferation of drones used for killing and spying. It is organized by the peace group CODEPINK, along with the Institute for Policy Studies, *The Nation* Magazine, Center for Constitutional Rights, and the National Lawyers Guild.

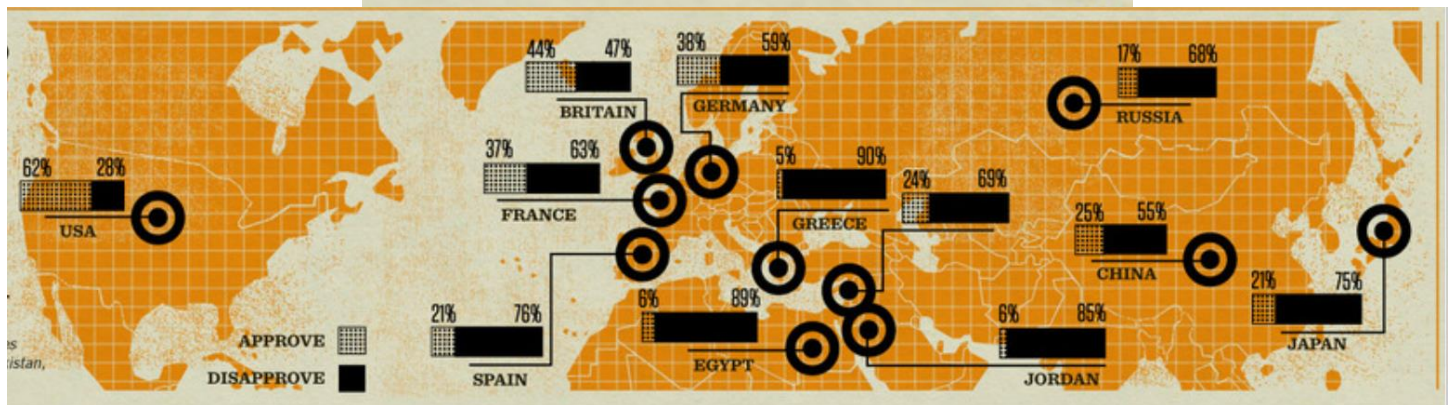
In addition to the Yemeni delegation, the Summit will include drone pilots, legal experts, human rights advocates, authors, technology experts, artists and grassroots activists. Their hope is to build a global movement to rein in the use of drones for the purposes of killing and spying. With the FAA mandated to open up US airspace to drones by 2015, and police departments around the country anxious to purchase drones with Homeland Security grants, the issue of drones for domestic surveillance is of grave concern to civil liberty and privacy activists.

It seems that the more Americans know about the effects of killer drones, the less likely they are to support them. Polls show a precipitous decline in support from 83 percent in 2012 to 61 percent year later. Hearing directly from the victims will continue to erode the support.

As Predator drones are forced out into the light of day, the veneer about their pinpoint precision and effectiveness in fighting terrorism is being peeled away. What gets exposed is the innocent lives destroyed and the blowback that keeps us in a state of perpetual war.

# HOW THE WORLD **PERCEIVES** THE U.S. DRONE STRIKES

According to Pew Research, American opinion stands in stark contrast to respondents around the world who generally disagree with the U.S. military's use of drone missile strikes against terrorists and extremists.



FINAL

English Language Arts  
Text-based Writing Rubrics  
Grades 6–11: Argumentation





<b>Grades 6–11</b> <b>Argumentation Text-based Writing Rubric</b> <b>(Score points within each domain include most of the characteristics below.)</b>			
<b>Score</b>	<b>Purpose, Focus, and Organization (4-point Rubric)</b>	<b>Evidence and Elaboration (4-point Rubric)</b>	<b>Conventions of Standard English (2-point Rubric begins at score point 2)</b>
4	<p>The response is fully sustained and consistently focused within the purpose, audience, and task; and it has a clear claim and effective organizational structure creating coherence and completeness. The response includes most of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strongly maintained claim with little or no loosely related material</li> <li>• Clearly addressed alternate or opposing claims*</li> <li>• Skillful use of a variety of transitional strategies to clarify the relationships between and among ideas</li> <li>• Logical progression of ideas from beginning to end with a satisfying introduction and conclusion</li> <li>• Appropriate style and tone established and maintained</li> </ul>	<p>The response provides thorough, convincing, and credible support, citing evidence for the writer’s claim that includes the effective use of sources, facts, and details. The response includes most of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smoothly integrated, thorough, and relevant evidence, including precise references to sources</li> <li>• Effective use of a variety of elaborative techniques to support the claim, demonstrating an understanding of the topic and text</li> <li>• Clear and effective expression of ideas, using precise language</li> <li>• Academic and domain-specific vocabulary clearly appropriate for the audience and purpose</li> <li>• Varied sentence structure, demonstrating language facility</li> </ul>	
3	<p>The response is adequately sustained and generally focused within the purpose, audience, and task; and it has a clear claim and evident organizational structure with a sense of completeness. The response includes most of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintained claim, though some loosely related material may be present</li> <li>• Alternate or opposing claims included but may not be completely addressed*</li> <li>• Adequate use of a variety of transitional strategies to clarify the relationships between and among ideas</li> <li>• Adequate progression of ideas from beginning to end with a sufficient introduction and conclusion</li> <li>• Appropriate style and tone established</li> </ul>	<p>The response provides adequate support, citing evidence for the writer’s claim that includes the use of sources, facts, and details. The response includes most of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generally integrated and relevant evidence from sources, though references may be general or imprecise</li> <li>• Adequate use of some elaborative techniques</li> <li>• Adequate expression of ideas, employing a mix of precise and general language</li> <li>• Domain-specific vocabulary generally appropriate for the audience and purpose</li> <li>• Some variation in sentence structure</li> </ul>	
<i>Continued on the following page</i>			

FINAL ELA Text-based Writing Rubrics, Grades 6–11: Argumentation  
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	<p>The response is somewhat sustained within the purpose, audience, and task but may include loosely related or extraneous material; and it may have a claim with an inconsistent organizational structure. The response may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focused claim but insufficiently sustained or unclear</li> <li>• Insufficiently addressed alternate or opposing claims*</li> <li>• Inconsistent use of transitional strategies with little variety</li> <li>• Uneven progression of ideas from beginning to end with an inadequate introduction or conclusion</li> </ul>	<p>The response provides uneven, cursory support/evidence for the writer’s claim that includes partial use of sources, facts, and details. The response may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weakly integrated evidence from sources; erratic or irrelevant references or citations</li> <li>• Repetitive or ineffective use of elaborative techniques</li> <li>• Imprecise or simplistic expression of ideas</li> <li>• Some use of inappropriate domain-specific vocabulary</li> <li>• Most sentences limited to simple constructions</li> </ul>	<p>The response demonstrates an adequate command of basic conventions. The response may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some minor errors in usage but no patterns of errors</li> <li>• Adequate use of punctuation, capitalization, sentence formation, and spelling</li> </ul>
1	<p>The response is related to the topic but may demonstrate little or no awareness of the purpose, audience, and task; and it may have no discernible claim and little or no discernible organizational structure. The response may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Absent, confusing, or ambiguous claim</li> <li>• Missing alternate or opposing claims*</li> <li>• Few or no transitional strategies</li> <li>• Frequent extraneous ideas that impede understanding</li> <li>• Too brief to demonstrate knowledge of focus or organization</li> </ul>	<p>The response provides minimal support/evidence for the writer’s claim, including little if any use of sources, facts, and details. The response may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimal, absent, erroneous, or irrelevant evidence or citations from the source material</li> <li>• Expression of ideas that is vague, unclear, or confusing</li> <li>• Limited and often inappropriate language or domain-specific vocabulary</li> <li>• Sentences limited to simple constructions</li> </ul>	<p>The response demonstrates a partial command of basic conventions. The response may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Various errors in usage</li> <li>• Inconsistent use of correct punctuation, capitalization, sentence formation, and spelling</li> </ul>
0			<p>The response demonstrates a lack of command of conventions, with frequent and severe errors often obscuring meaning.</p>

\*Not applicable at grade 6