

6. WRITING SECTION

A new five-point rating scale was launched in May 2009. The descriptors for performance levels A, B, and C did not change; level D was divided into a new D and an E level. The minimum passing level continues to be C. The writing task has not changed. Table 11 presents the new five-point rating scale.

Table 11: Writing Section 5-Point Rating Scale

| RATING | RHETORIC | GRAMMAR/SYNTAX | VOCABULARY | MECHANICS |
|---------------------|---|---|---|---|
| A Honors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic richly, fully, complexly developed • Organization well-controlled, appropriate to the material • Connection is smooth | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible use of a wide range of syntactic (sentence level) structures; morphological (word forms) control nearly always accurate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broad range, appropriately used | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spelling and punctuation errors are rare and insignificant |
| B | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic clearly and completely developed, with acknowledgment of its complexity • Organization is controlled and shows appropriateness to the material • Few problems with connection | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both simple and complex syntax adequately used; good morphological control | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocabulary use shows flexibility, is usually appropriate • Any inappropriate vocabulary does not confuse meaning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spelling and punctuation errors are infrequent and not distracting |
| C | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic clearly developed, but not always completely or with acknowledgment of its complexity • Organization generally controlled; connection sometimes absent or unsuccessful | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both simple and complex syntax present • For some, syntax is cautious but accurate, while others are more fluent but less accurate • Inconsistent morphological control | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate vocabulary, but may sometimes be inappropriately used | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spelling and punctuation errors sometimes distracting |
| D | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic development usually clear but simple and may be repetitive • Attempts to address different perspectives on the topic are often unsuccessful • Overreliance on prefabricated language and/or language from the prompt • Organization partially controlled | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morphological errors are frequent • Simple sentences tend to be accurate; more complex ones tend to be inaccurate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocabulary may be limited in range, and is sometimes inappropriately used to the point that it causes confusion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spelling and punctuation errors are frequently distracting |
| E | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic development may be unclear and/or limited by incompleteness or lack of focus • Might not be relevant to topic • Connection of ideas often absent or unsuccessful | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pervasive and basic errors in sentence structure and word order cause confusion • Problems with subject-verb agreement, tense formation or word formation • Even basic sentences are filled with errors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorrect use of vocabulary causes confusion • Even basic words may be misused • May show interference from other languages | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic vocabulary words regularly misspelled • Little or no control over sentence boundaries • Spelling and punctuation errors regularly cause confusion |