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I did not create these prompts, nor are they available for resale.

These prompts are simply being shared in a single condensed document for your convenience.

Catrina Lee

Exemplar essays (in response to these prompts) and essay structure guides are available in my shop: <https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/GED-Extended-Response-Essay-Exemplars-5-Argumentative-Essays-Structure-Guide-2995656>

**Included in the bundle found at the link above:**

\* Five color-coded 5 paragraph extended response exemplars for the GED + link to
their five correlating GED prompts taken from the testing site (available for free in
my shop)

\* Color-coded essay structure guide with sentence stems to support struggling
writers

\* Explanation of my tried and true four-step process of helping students pass the
written portion of the GED

\* Editable word document

Link to prompts found in my shop: https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/GED-Prompts-for-Extended-Response-Essays-2995681

These exemplars and the structure guides are also great for any LA teacher teaching the argumentative essay .The prompts instruct students to read two opposing views on a single topic. Then, the student has to write an essay arguing for the strongest argument.

I have refined and used the materials included in this bundle for three years, and the results are consistently outstanding. I've found that students struggle most with organization, and the color-coded exemplars combined with the structure guide have proved invaluable.

**Sample Extended Response Passages and Prompts for Classroom Practice - RLA**

Fully answering an ER prompt often requires 4 to 7 paragraphs of 3 to 7 sentences each – that can quickly add up to 300 to 500 words of writing! A response that is significantly shorter could put your students in danger of scoring a 0 just for not showing enough of their writing skills.

**Passage #1 - Are Tweens Ready for Cell Phones?**Extended Response Prompt:

Analyze the arguments presented in the two speeches.

In your response, develop an argument in which you explain how one position is better supported than the other. Incorporate relevant and specific evidence from both sources to support your argument.

Remember, the better-argued position is not necessarily the position with which you agree. This task should take approximately 45 minutes to complete.

Extended Response Stimulus Materials:

**Source Material #1**

Speech: “Tweens” Are Ready for Cell Phones by Deborah Pendergast

“Safer Kids Summit”

Thank you for inviting me to the first “Safer Kids Summit.” We are here to discuss ways to keep our children safe in an increasingly complex world. Today’s focus is on technology— specifically on the ideal age to give kids their own cell phones. As a representative of a large telecommunications company, I receive many inquiries from parents on this topic, and this is what I tell them: It depends on the child, of course, but in general, age 10 is just about right.

A 2012 survey by the National Consumers League backs me up. The survey found that almost 60 percent of children ages 8 to 12 already have cell phones. These “tweens” can contact their parents at any time, and vice versa, giving the kids a sense of empowerment and their parents a feeling of security. Caroline Knorr, of the group Common Sense Media, says, "We want our kids to be independent, to be able to walk home from school and play at the playground without us. We want them to have that old-fashioned, fun experience of being on their own, and cell phones can help with that.” Picture the following scenario: You told your fourth-grader that you would pick her up after school, but you are stuck in traffic. She is waiting for you …and waiting, and waiting. But if you both have cell phones, you can call her to let her know you are delayed, and she can go back inside the school, where there are adults around. You both breathe a sigh of relief.

Psychologists tell us that the period between ages 10 and 12 is one of growing independence. It is a time to teach children about responsibility, and to give them opportunities to earn our trust. Providing a 10-year-old with a cell phone offers an ideal way to achieve these goals and gives parents peace of mind as well.

**Source Material #2**

Speech: Wait Until They Are Older by Linda Sidner

“Safer Kids Summit”

Good morning! I come to this topic as a parent and a veteran teacher of so-called “tweens.” I love kids this age for their curiosity and energy, but those same qualities can lead to trouble if not overseen by adults. That’s why giving children their own phones actually makes them less safe, not more. I believe that the best age for a cell phone is 16, the point at which we consider kids grown-up enough to learn to drive — and even then, parents must set firm limits on phone use!

Why are tweens with phones less safe? For one thing, parents may be lulled into a false sense of security if their kids have phones. They may become careless about knowing where their child is and who he is with, thinking, “I can always reach him on his phone.” For another, cell phones give children access to all the frightening, dangerous, and inappropriate sites on the Internet, with no parent nearby to monitor this activity. But perhaps the most worrisome aspect of giving cell phones to children is the rise in “cyberbullying” or “text bullying.” Text bullying means using a cell phone to send cruel, embarrassing, or false text messages to or about someone. In one study, researcher Elizabeth Englander found that by middle school, over 90% of children report that they use their cell phones to text or go onto the Internet. She also found that in grades 3 through 5, between 14 and 19 percent of children reported being victims of cyberbullying. What if it’s your child on the receiving end of this cruelty? Or, perhaps worse, what if your child is the bully? Children of this age are simply not mature enough to handle this technology, and we shouldn’t expect them to be. It’s our job as adults to protect them. That’s why I say: It’s better to wait.

**Passage #2–Internet Filtering in the Workplace
Prompt:**Analyze the arguments presented in the two emails.

In your response develop an argument in which you explain how one position is better supported than the other. Incorporate relevant and specific evidence from each article to support your argument.

Remember, the better-argued position is not necessarily the one you personally agree with.

Extended Response Stimulus Materials:

**Source Material #1**

Email

From: Justine Timmons, CEO

Sent: Monday, September 24

To: Employees of Niagara Equipment Corp.

**Subject: Workplace Internet Use**

Beginning next month, we are instituting a new policy for all employees regarding Internet use at work. To limit access to inappropriate and social media websites, we are installing new filtering software that will block those sites on every company-owned computer.

Although management recognizes that the Internet is a valuable tool, especially for our creative department and sales team, we are also aware of the potentially costly downsides to unlimited access. According to a survey by Salary.com, at least 64 percent of employees nationwide admit to visiting non-work-related websites while on the job. This “cyberslacking,” as it is called, hurts productivity and wastes company resources. Workers who are distracted by checking their social media sites are clearly not giving their full attention to their jobs.

The other important reason that we are installing filters is to promote a positive workplace for all of our valued employees. When staff members use their computers to access offensive or inappropriate material that can be seen by their fellow workers, this creates a hostile workplace environment, thereby exposing the company to expensive and demoralizing lawsuits. Even social networking sites can lead to legal jeopardy if they are used to bully fellow workers. Other businesses have already faced harassment suits for just such activities.

A committee comprising representatives of each team will be formed to determine which sites to block. Please tell your team leader if you are interested in serving on this committee.

Thank you all for your cooperation and for your commitment to making Niagara Equipment the best place to work in Buffalo!

Best,

Justine Timmons, CEO

**Source Material #2**

From: Honoria Bell

Sent: Tuesday, September 25

To: Justine Timmons, CEO

CC: Employees of Niagara Equipment Corp.

**Subject: Workplace Internet Use**

Dear Ms. Timmons,

We, the undersigned employees of Niagara Equipment Corp., urge management to reconsider the installation of Internet-filtering software. While we recognize that it is in all our interests to promote productivity and a positive workplace environment, we believe that blocking our free access to the Internet is the wrong way to go about this. First, there is more to that Salary.com statistic that you cite than meets the eye. Most of the “cyberslackers” in that survey surf the Internet for only one hour per week. This is comparable to taking a walk to the water cooler or chatting about last night’s game with a colleague. According to author Laura Vanderkam, “no one can get through a whole workday without taking a break.” In fact, one 2009 study found that workers who could occasionally check the Internet were happier at work than those who could not. Another study, this one from the National University of Singapore, found that Web-surfing refreshed employees, actually making them more productive, not less.

Second, one important function of the Internet is as a communication tool, just like the telephone. Just as workers are permitted to make brief personal calls at work, so should they be allowed to use the Internet for the same purpose.

Third, we believe that the best way to grow as a business and protect the company from lawsuits is to hire responsible employees and then demonstrate your trust in them.

Instead of treating us like children, why not establish clear guidelines concerning Internet use? All employees can understand the reasons that offensive websites are off limits.

Finally, installing an Internet filter may create resentment and tempt some employees to find ways around the filters. It is an unnecessary solution in search of a problem.

Thank you for your attention.

Honoria Bell, Chief Designer and the undersigned 53 employees

**Passage #3–Diamond Mining**

**Prompt**

While opponents of diamond mining believe that the hazards associated with the industry should lead to a ban, proponents argue that companies are sufficiently improving practices and addressing public concerns. In your response, analyze the two articles to determine which position is best supported. Use relevant and specific evidence from both articles to support your response.

**Article A: Diamond Mining: Harmful to the Environment**

By Tavin McLeavitt

The diamond mining industry directly affects an estimated 10 million people around the world. Eleven nations are currently considered major producers of diamonds, and several other countries also currently operate diamond mines. While some companies and countries have made a fortune from diamond mining, the diamond mining industry as a whole has a long history of abusing human rights and exploiting workers.

The industry's devastating impact on the environment is another reason why diamond mining should be banned. During any mining process, the soil, water, and air surrounding a mine become polluted. Diamond mining is no different. Large quantities of soil must be removed, reducing available natural land resources. For example, the process of removing soil along the coast forever changes shorelines, which has a wide-ranging impact. In addition, any mine's expansion encroaches on natural animal habitats, decreasing wildlife populations.

Diamond mining also affects water supply and quality. Water is used to extract diamonds, but water is a scarce resource in Africa, where many of the world's diamond mines are located. Many countries cannot afford to trade a necessity like clean water for a luxury like diamonds. Canada's Northwest Territories provides an example of how water is affected by diamond mining. Companies have drained twenty lakes, causing massive changes to the environment and disrupting the natural habitats of many species. Caribou in the Northwest Territories appear to be migrating away from traditional habitats that have been disturbed by diamond mining operations.

 Finally, energy sources used to operate diamond mines create greenhouse gases. Diesel fuels, electricity, and hydrocarbons used in diamond mining all release harmful carbons into the air. These chemicals cause smog, climate change, and other environmental hazards yet to be discovered. The long-term environmental impact is simply not worth the financial gains a few corporations and countries desire.

**Article B: Diamond Mining Companies Find New Ways to Preserve the Environment**

by Shaunna Rangel

The diamond mining Industry is not the environmental villain it is often portrayed to be. Although any mining operation for any important mineral can disturb delicate ecology, diamond mining companies have proven to be responsive to public concern and have worked hard to reduce the impact of their search for what could be argued as the world's most precious and symbolic resource. World governments are cooperating to ensure environmental safety and preservation around diamond mines. In some cases, areas surrounding the mines are actually improved!

A number of wildlife preserves have been established to protect and breed species of animals endangered by diamond mines. For example, the Diavik Diamond Mine in Canada has implemented an advisory board to study ways to protect the fish near the mining area. The program was so successful that it has widened to include the arctic deer. In South Africa, the national parks system has worked together with the Peace Parks Foundation and the diamond industry to set up a conservation area for wildlife near the Venetia Diamond Mine.

Furthermore, governments are trying to reduce waste and reuse resources while mining for diamonds. Environmental management companies closely monitor the mines and routinely publish reports on their environmental impact. Many of the mines even do more than the minimum required by regulated standards. A number of mine operators restore topsoil removed from a mining site. Researchers are working on new, less water-intensive methods of diamond extract ion. Measures to use energy sources that do not emit dangerous carbons into the air have been put into place, and the levels of chemicals that reach the air are closely monitored. With support and regulation from governments, the mining industry can safely continue to benefit a large number of who live in the countries where diamonds are mined.

**Passage #4–Automatic Traffic Lights**

**Prompt:** Analyze the arguments presented in the speech and the letter to the editor.

In your response, develop an argument in which you explain how one position is better supported than the other. Incorporate relevant and specific evidence from both sources to support your argument.

Remember, the better-argued position is not necessarily the position with which you agree.

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**Speech: Proposal for Automatic Traffic Light Cameras**

by Councilman Lorenzo Hart

Baler Town Council meeting

Fellow council members:

The cuts to this year’s budget mean that fewer funds are available for many town departments. We must thoughtfully examine how to use our resources most effectively. I propose installing automatic traffic light cameras at 10 major intersections in town.

Clearly, monitoring intersections is a public safety concern that lends itself to technology. Automatic traffic cameras photograph the license plates of automobiles running red lights. The town then sends traffic tickets to the violators. Automating this process will allow our police officers to focus on duties that require human attention, saving the cost of hiring additional officers.

Beyond the practical advantage, automatic traffic cameras have well-documented benefits. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration states that running red lights causes hundreds of traffic fatalities and thousands of injuries annually. According to a 2010 report by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, red-light cameras have lowered these numbers in hundreds of U.S. cities. A 2005 Federal Highway Administration study found a 25% decrease in front-into-side auto accidents in seven cities that use red-light cameras.

Currently, drivers who get away with red-light violations tend to repeat the behavior, making intersections less safe overall. Automatic cameras discourage this habit. A 2009 study of a program in Montgomery County, Maryland, showed an average 78% decline in the number of red-light tickets issued after the cameras had operated for a year. Only about one-third of the drivers who each received a red-light violation ticket repeated the violation within a two-year period.

In addition, by citing violators who may have gone unpunished without the assistance of the cameras, our town would increase revenue through additional traffic fines. A single intersection in Lawrence Township, New Jersey, generated over $1 million in fines in only one year. The facts show that an investment in these cameras pays for itself. Please support this proposal.

**Letter to the Editor: Automatic Cameras Not an Automatic Solution**

*Baler Herald*

April 8

The town council’s proposal to install 10 automatic

red-light cameras at traffic lights is a proposal to waste money. I have scrutinized the details and calculated the costs. The proposal does say that the company AutoCamera Inc. has promised to waive installation fees that would normally run $50,000–$100,000 per intersection. However, that same company will charge us $5,000–$6,000 *each month per camera* to operate and maintain the cameras. That is at least $60,000 per year for *one camera*. Installing 10 cameras will have quite a high price tag. Six hundred thousand dollars per year could instead pay the salaries of new officers.

These cameras create other unexpected costs as well. In New Jersey and New York, several cities have been sued over the timing of traffic lights with automatic cameras. Plaintiffs often contend that the yellow lights are illegally short and that required inspections of the cameras were not performed. Lawsuits over automatic cameras are all too common, occurring also in states such as Ohio, Illinois, Missouri, and California. In a single December in New Jersey alone, traffic light company ATS settled 16 separate class-action lawsuits. Because we cannot control public reaction to these cameras, the real costs are hidden. Any new fines collected may pale in comparison to increased legal fees.

Additionally, the safety benefits of automatic red-light cameras are unclear. A 2005 National Highway Traffic Safety Administration report says that some cities using the cameras have seen a decrease in front-into-side accidents, but rear-end collisions have increased. Apparently, speeding drivers notice the cameras at the last minute. They apply their brakes abruptly, surprising the unsuspecting drivers behind them and causing accidents. These additional collisions are avoidable if we reject this proposal.

In every way, actual traffic police officers are superior to automatic red-light cameras. The only investment we need to make is hiring more officers.

**Passage #5–Reusable Bags**

**Prompt:**

Some cities are beginning to address the environmental concerns associated with paper and plastic bag use, but not everyone agrees about what should be done.

In your response, analyze both the editorial and the letter to the editor to determine which position is best supported. Use relevant and specific evidence from both sources to support your response.

**Text # 1: Editorial:**

The editorial staff at the​ Gulftowne Gazette​ says three cheers for the Gulftowne Ordinance Committee! Finally, they are serious about making reusable shopping bags mandatory in every store with Proposition 328.

Americans concerned about our environment agree that plastic bags litter our landscape and threaten wildlife. Many cities across the country and around the globe have banned their use. Paper bags are not the ideal replacement for plastic bags either. Cutting down trees to make paper greatly diminishes our forests. The actual manufacturing of paper bags contributes to pollution. The obvious solution is to mandate that consumers bring reusable bags with them when they go shopping.

Reusable bags are made from canvas or other cloth, man­made fibers, or sturdy plastic. A variety of these bags are sold at most supermarket checkout stands. Discount stores and even dollar stores sell reusable bags. These bags are lightweight, washable, and durable. Many styles can last for years. It is mind­boggling to think of how many trees would be saved and how much landfill space could be freed if all shoppers used reusable bags. A widely reported study found that the United States uses 100 billion disposable plastic shopping bags every year!

The cost to consumers to purchase reusable bags is minimal, some costing less than a dollar. Many retailers already charge fees to consumers who want their purchases placed in disposable plastic or paper shopping bags. While these fees are small, paying for one­time use bags on a weekly basis adds up. Eventually, the purchase of reusable bags is more cost­effective.

Those opposing the mandatory use of reusable shopping bags cite health concerns as their reason. They base their fears on a study conducted at the University of Arizona and Loma Linda University, which showed reusable bags to have unacceptable levels of bacteria growth and mold after being used to haul groceries. This issue can easily be addressed by washing the bags frequently. Using separate bags for meats and produce also reduces the chance of contaminating food placed in reusable bags.

Wake up, Gulftowne. Let's all follow the ordinance committee's lead and finally put an end to the "paper or plastic" question. Making a long­term investment now by purchasing reusable bags creates a win­win situation for our citizens and our environment.

**Text #2: Letter to the Editor:**

I strongly disagree with your editorial earlier this week on the new reusable bag ordinance. Shop owners in Gulftowne rely on tourists to make a living. Unfortunately, it appears the Ordinance Committee did not think beyond the grocery store when considering this terrible ordinance.

I own a gift shop. Tourists buy mementos, figurines, t­shirts, postcards and beach supplies. Many vacation purchases fit into bags no larger than an envelope. Requiring our visitors to bring reusable bags for such purchases makes absolutely no sense.

Most shop owners cannot afford to provide reusable bags to customers. The bags used now have logos, addresses, phone numbers, and website addresses. They are not free. Where in the ordinance is the cost to make new multi­sized bags with store information? Where is the investment in our community businesses?

Shop owners are also concerned about the environment, but we don't want tourists shopping in the next town where paper and plastic bags are still used to avoid this hassle. People come to Gulftowne to enjoy the beach and for relaxation. Why complicate their days and add an expense that makes them buy a bag for their purchases? This requirement may make sense in a grocery store, where most disposable bags are handed out anyway, but penalizing other types of shops who don't really contribute to the problem is unacceptable.

If this ordinance goes into effect, I hope the committee plans to add a few words to our city welcome sign: "Bring Your Own Bags".

Theo Jones

Owner, *Gulftowne Gifts*

**Extended Response Answer Guidelines – RLA Test**

Please use the guidelines below as you answer the Extended Response question on the Reasoning Through Language Arts test. Following these guidelines as closely as possible will ensure that you provide the best response.

1. Please note that this task must be completed in no more than 45 minutes. However, don’t rush through your response. Be sure to read through the passage(s) and the prompt. Then think about the message you want to convey in your response. Be sure to plan your response before you begin writing. Draft your response and revise it as needed.

2. Fully answering an ER prompt often requires 4 to 7 paragraphs of 3 to 7 sentences each – that can quickly add up to 300 to 500 words of writing! A response that is significantly shorter could put you in danger of scoring a 0 just for not showing enough of your writing skills.

3. As you read, think carefully about the argumentation presented in the passage(s). “Argumentation” refers to the assumptions, claims, support, reasoning, and credibility on which a position is based. Pay close attention to how the author(s) use these strategies to convey his or her positions.

4. When you write your essay, be sure to: • determine which position presented in the passage(s) is better supported by evidence from the passage(s) • explain why the position you chose is the better-supported one • remember, the better-supported position is not necessarily the position you agree with • defend your assertions with multiple pieces of evidence from the passage(s) • build your main points thoroughly • put your main points in logical order and tie your details to your main points • organize your response carefully and consider your audience, message, and purpose • use transitional words and phrases to connect sentences, paragraphs, and ideas • choose words carefully to express your ideas clearly • vary your sentence structure to enhance the flow and clarity of your response • reread and revise your response to correct any errors in grammar, usage, or punctuation