

Thematic Essay

Name: _____

Memo: _____

5	100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thoroughly develops all aspects of the topic evenly and in depth. • Is more analytical than descriptive (analyzes, evaluates, and/or creates information). • Richly supports the theme with many well-chosen, relevant and specific facts, examples, and details (2b). • Uses varied transitions and sentence structures to create cohesion and clarify relationships among ideas (2c); • Uses precise language, domain-specific vocabulary, and maintains a formal style (2d, 2e). • Demonstrates a logical and clear plan of organization (2a); includes an introduction (2a) and a conclusion (2f) that are beyond a restatement of the theme
	94	
4	85	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops all aspects of the task but may do so somewhat unevenly • Is both descriptive and analytical (applies, analyzes, evaluates, and/or creates information) • Supports the theme with relevant facts, examples, and details • Demonstrates a logical and clear plan of organization; includes an introduction and a conclusion that are beyond a restatement of the theme • May be minor weakness in cohesion, domain-specific vocabulary, and/or writing style.
	78	
3	71	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops all aspects of the task with little depth or develops most aspects of the task in some depth • Is more descriptive than analytical (applies, may analyze, and/or evaluate information) • Includes some relevant facts, examples, and details; may include some minor inaccuracies • Demonstrates a satisfactory plan of organization; includes an introduction and a conclusion that may be a restatement of the theme • Weaknesses found in cohesion, domain-specific vocabulary, and/or writing style.
	65	
2	58	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimally develops all aspects of the task or develops some aspects of the task in some depth • Is primarily descriptive; may include faulty, weak, or isolated application or analysis • Includes few relevant facts, examples, and details; may include some inaccuracies • Demonstrates a general plan of organization; may lack focus; may contain digressions; may not clearly identify which aspect of the task is being addressed; may lack an introduction and/or a conclusion • Serious weaknesses found in cohesion, domain-specific vocabulary, and/or writing style.

INFORMATION

- There is no credit for tasks scoring below level 2.
- This task is done without access to notes or references of any kind.

Social Studies Thematic Essay Frame

INTRODUCTION

A strong introduction goes beyond restating the theme.

- Define what the essay will address.
- Outline the path your essay will take.

One strategy you could use is this three-part introduction:

“The first few sentences are borrowed from the theme you are given. The next sentence or two explains the theme further in your own words. This is the hard part, but if you can make yourself do this, you will be sure to understand the topic you are to write about. The last sentence outlines the path the essay is to take.”

DEVELOPMENT PARAGRAPHS

- Divide the body into paragraphs by similar topic.
- If the essay topic has several parts, usually it is best to handle each part in a separate paragraph.
- If the essay topic asks you to prove something by citing a certain number of different time periods or civilizations, sometimes it is best to group these into separate paragraphs.
- Use varied transitions and sentence structures to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.
- Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic and convey a style appropriate to social studies.
- Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of social studies.

CONCLUSION:

- A strong conclusion goes beyond restating the theme or just announcing that you've finished.
- Echo the introduction or the most important point you've made.
- Highlight the most important things you said in a fresh way.
- Don't introduce new material.
- Sometimes include your own perspective on the question.

Rubric Information for Task: Thematic Essay

This rubric was aligned to New York State Grade 8 Intermediate Social Studies Test and to the New York State Global History and Geography Regents Exam using standardized z-score equivalency procedure in October 2010. All distributions are normal (fit empirical rule). Individual scores on this rubric can be transformed as state exam equivalent scores using the standardized z-score equivalency procedure.

This Task	New York State Intermediate Social Studies Test	Global History and Geography Regents
N=30	N= 30 <i>random scores of 87 over 3 years</i>	N=30 <i>random scores of 72 over 3 years</i>

$z = (i - \bar{X})/s$	This Rubric $\bar{X} = 79.2$ $S = 21.23$	NYS Int. SS Test $\bar{X} = 82.6$ $S = 11.71$	Regents $\bar{X} = 76.5$ $S = 16.83$
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Base Scores for Alignment	This Task Equivalent Int. SS Test Score	This Task Equivalent Regents Score	NYS Int. SS Test Standard Score	Regents Standard Score	This Task Standard Score aligned with NYS Int. SS Test	This Task Standard Score aligned with Regents
65	74.4	71.1	-1.5	-1.5	-0.7	-1.0
71	77.9	79.1	-1.0	-1.0	-0.4	-0.4
85	86.1	88.4	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.3
100	94.3	97.7	1.4	1.2	1.0	1.0