

## Sample Test Questions - Source-based Essay

This section presents a source-based essay topic and sample responses along with the standards used in scoring the source-based essays. When you read these sample responses, keep in mind that they will be less polished than if they had been developed at home, edited, and carefully presented. The examinee does not know what question will be asked or what sources will be used in conjunction with the topic and must decide, on the spot, how to respond. Readers take these circumstances into account when scoring the essays; they have been trained to judge the overall quality rather than to attempt to count errors.

Each essay is scored holistically, on the basis of its total quality. In computing your total Core Academic Skills for Educators: Writing score, the scores for both the argumentative and explanatory essays are combined with the score for the selected-response part of the Writing test.

Readers assign scores for the source-based essay based on the following scoring guide.

### Scoring Guide for Source-based Essay

#### Score of 6

A 6 essay demonstrates a *high degree of competence* in response to the assignment but may have a few minor errors.

An essay in this category:

- insightfully explains why the concerns are important, supporting the explanation with effective links between the two sources and well-chosen reasons, examples, or details
- incorporates information from both sources to identify and explain important concerns regarding the issue discussed in the sources
- organizes and develops ideas logically
- displays effective sentence variety
- clearly displays facility in the use of language
- is generally free from errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics
- cites both sources when paraphrasing or quoting

#### Score of 5

A 5 essay demonstrates *clear competence* in response to the assignment but may have minor errors.

An essay in this category:

- clearly explains why the concerns are important, supporting the explanation with clear links between the two sources and relevant reasons, examples, or details
- incorporates information from both sources to identify and explain important concerns regarding the issue discussed in the sources
- organizes and develops ideas clearly
- displays some sentence variety
- displays facility in the use of language
- is generally free from errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics
- cites both sources when paraphrasing or quoting

#### Score of 4

A 4 essay demonstrates *competence* in response to the assignment.

An essay in this category:

- adequately explains why the concerns are important, supporting the explanation with some links between the two sources and adequate reasons, examples, or details
- incorporates information from both sources to identify and explain important concerns regarding the issue discussed in the sources
- shows control in the organization and development of ideas
- displays adequate use of language
- shows control of grammar, usage, and mechanics, but may display errors
- cites both sources when paraphrasing or quoting

### Score of 3

A 3 essay demonstrates *some competence* in response to the assignment but is obviously flawed.

An essay in this category reveals *one or more* of the following weaknesses:

- limited in explaining why the concerns are important
- incorporates only one source to identify and explain concerns regarding the issue discussed in the sources, or incorporates two sources inadequately
- limited in supporting the explanation (establishes only a weak link between the sources and/or offers inadequate reasons, examples, or details)
- limited control in the organization and development of ideas
- an accumulation of errors in the use of language
- an accumulation of errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics
- cites sources when paraphrasing or quoting

### Score of 2

A 2 essay is *seriously flawed*.

An essay in this category reveals *one or more* of the following weaknesses:

- fails to explain why the concerns are important
- incorporates only one source weakly or fails to identify concerns regarding the issue discussed in the sources
- offers weak support for the explanation (no link between the sources and/or few or no relevant reasons, examples, or details)
- weak organization or very little development
- frequent serious errors in the use of language
- frequent serious errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics
- fails to cite any sources when paraphrasing or quoting

### Score of 1

A 1 essay demonstrates *fundamental deficiencies* in writing skills.

An essay in this category:

- contains serious and persistent writing errors or
- is incoherent or
- is undeveloped

## Sample Source-based Essay Topic

On the computer screen will you see the following:

**Directions:**

The following assignment requires you to use information from two sources to discuss the most important concerns that relate to a specific issue. When paraphrasing or quoting from the sources, cite each source used by referring to the author's last name, the title, or any other (less desirable) information.

**Assignment:**

Copyright protection grants the author of a creative work (such as a book, film, painting, or recording) the sole right to copy, publish, or profit from the work. Copyright protection lasts for a specific term. If a copyright is not renewed or if a work reaches a certain age, copyright protection no longer applies and the work is considered to be in the public domain, meaning that any person can reproduce it without paying for the right to do so. Both of the following sources address the ways in which artists create new works and how copyright protection affects artistic creation, and particularly whether copyright protection of existing works hinders or promotes creativity.

**Buttons:** Cut, Paste, Undo

The essay topic will appear on the top half of the computer screen. You will compose and type your response to the topic on the bottom half of the computer screen.

**Directions:** In the following section you will have 30 minutes to read two short passages on a topic and then plan and write an essay on that topic. The essay will be an informative essay based on the two sources that are provided.

Read the topic and sources carefully. You will probably find it best to spend a little time considering the topic and organizing your thoughts before you begin writing. **DO NOT WRITE ON A TOPIC OTHER THAN THE ONE SPECIFIED.** Essays on topics of your own choice will not be acceptable. In order for your test to be scored, your responses must be in English.

The essay questions are included in this test to give you an opportunity to demonstrate how well you can write. You should, therefore, take care to write clearly and effectively, using specific examples where appropriate. Remember that how well you write is much more important than how much you write, but to cover the topics adequately, you will probably need to write more than one paragraph.

## Assignment

Copyright protection grants the author of a creative work (such as a book, film, painting, or recording) the sole right to copy, publish, or profit from the work. Copyright protection lasts for a specific term. If a copyright is not renewed or if a work reaches a certain age, copyright protection no longer applies and the work is considered to be in the public domain, meaning that any person can reproduce it without paying for the right to do so. Both of the following sources address the ways in which artists create new works and how copyright protection affects artistic creation, and particularly whether copyright protection of existing works hinders or promotes creativity.

Read the two passages carefully and then write an essay in which you identify the most important concerns regarding the issue and explain why they are important. Your essay must draw on information from **BOTH** of the sources. In addition, you may draw on your own experiences, observations, or reading. Be sure to **CITE** the sources whether you are paraphrasing or directly quoting.

## Source 1

Adapted from: McLeod, Kembrew. *Freedom of Expression®: Overzealous Copyright Bozos and Other Enemies of Creativity*. New York: Doubleday, 2005. 79–80. Web. 14 Feb. 2013.

One of the more headache-inducing aspects of the way copyright law is interpreted is the seeming randomness of it all. When writing a book, quoting from another book is perfectly acceptable. . . . But quoting more than two lines from a song's lyrics in a book . . . might get you and your publisher in trouble. As long as it's brief, singing a phrase from an old song and placing it in a new song probably won't get you sued, and a court likely wouldn't consider it an infringement. However, David Sanjek—director of the Broadcast Music Incorporated (BMI) archives—is careful to point out to me that any copyright owner with an axe to grind *could* sue . . .

More mind-numbing examples from other mediums: Referring to a trademarked good in everyday conversation will cause no problem, but movie directors often have to get permission from an intellectual-property owner to show it or even mention it in movie dialogue. Referring to trademarked brands in pop songs is okay. But creating satire on a Web site by using a company logo requires you to exactly duplicate a privately owned image, and this leaves you more vulnerable to a lawsuit.

Today's unrealistically high standards of originality don't reflect the way people have always made art and music. What's the difference, really, between T. S. Eliot invoking and *directly quoting from* the Bible, Greek myths, Dante, Shakespeare, Arthurian legend, and dozens of other cultural works, and Public Enemy doing the same sort of thing with sound? There is no convincing argument I have heard that justifies why it is fine in printed works to quote small fragments from books, poems, or plays, but quoting and collaging small fragments of sound is unacceptable.

## Source 2

Adapted from: Martin, Scott M. "The Mythology of the Public Domain: Exploring the Myths Behind Attacks on the Duration of Copyright Protection." *Loyola of Los Angeles Law Review*. 36.1 (2002): 272. Web. 14 Feb. 2013.

At the risk of speaking words of heresy, it is copyright protection that *encourages* innovation and creativity, while the public domain *discourages* both innovation and creativity.

Why create something new if you can reprint or reuse something that already exists? Why invest in untested new works if you can instead distribute royalty-free existing works?

The fact that creators of new works cannot merely re-use the expression contained in copyrighted work of others without permission forces them to be creative. Composers cannot rehash the melodies created by earlier composers, they must create their own new original melodies. Writers must invent new characters and plots instead of recycling the efforts of others. Animators and motion picture studios cannot freeloader on Mickey Mouse; copyright protection forces them to create their own original cartoon characters. This promotion of fresh creation is an entirely appropriate goal for Congress to pursue through legislation.

Counter to the "copyright good, public domain better" myth, an extension of the term of copyright protection at the temporary expense of public domain *encourages* rather than *discourages* the creation of fresh new original works. Opponents of the current duration of copyright protection argue that an earlier termination of copyright protection would *encourage* the copyright owner to create new works rather than relying on income from old works. While such a result may ensue from earlier loss of copyright protection, if creation of fresh works is a policy goal for copyright law, is it not better to create incentives for all creators to develop new works in lieu of free-loading on existing works than it is to encourage just one party—the copyright owner—to develop new works?

## Sample Source-based Essay That Received a Score of 5

*Major areas of concern with regards to copyright law seem to stem for the most part from issues with creativity and with consistency of the law. In his piece, Kembrew McLeod attacks the “seeming randomness” (“Freedom of Expression”: Copyright Bozos and Other Enemies of Creativity”) of the standards for copyright laws. He compares the differences between quoting from text versus quoting sound, such as song lyrics, as well as other aspects that fall under the law. Essentially, he feels that the main issue with copyright laws is the fact that it is acceptable to quote in or from some areas of conversation (such as text) but dangerous to do so in others (such as in song). Also, McLeod implies that copyright laws have contributed to “unrealistically high standards of originality [which] don’t reflect the way people have always made art and music” (McLeod). He implies that using and expanding on other work does not hinder creativity or originality and standards on plagiarism today are unrealistic.*

*Scott Martin’s piece complicates this idea by presenting a viewpoint in direct opposition to it. He very explicitly states, “it is copyright protection that encourages innovation and creativity, while the public domain discourages both innovation and creativity” (Martin). Martin’s logic for this is that if it weren’t for copyright laws, creators would have no reason to make new work when they could benefit much more easily from earlier works.*

*So, simply put, along with the inconsistency of the copyright law as explained by McLeod, the argument over creativity is the central concern of the issue at hand. On one side, McLeod implies that using other works is not a hindrance to creativity. On the other hand, Martin argues that copyright laws are what force innovation since artists cannot rely on other works.*

## Comments on Sample Source-based Essay That Received a Score of 5

This response offers a clear explanation of important issues discussed in the provided sources, immediately identifying “issues with creativity and consistency of the law.” Information from the two sources is smoothly incorporated as evidence in the discussion of the issues and used to further identify related problems. The sources are acknowledged or cited when necessary. The organization and development of ideas is clear, and the writer links the sources to each other: “Martin’s piece complicates this [McLeod’s] idea ...” The essay has a variety of sentence structures and displays facility in the use of language (e.g., “So, simply put, along with the inconsistency . . .”). While its explanation of the importance of the identified concerns is clear, it does not quite reach the level of insightful explanation required for a score of 6. Nevertheless, this is a clearly competent response that earns a score of 5.

## Sample Source-based Essay that Received a Score of 4

*There are many good things associated with copyright law and many bad things associated with it. In an essay written by Kembrew McLeod he explains the issues he has with copyright law. While in an essay written by Scott M. Martin, he explains why copyright law is good. To look at this issue Kembrew’s essay will be looked at followed by Scott’s.*

*Kembrew is not a big fan of copyright law. The thing that annoys him the most about this is that it seems to be pretty random in how it is applied (McLeod). He gives an example of how “when writing a book, quoting from another book is perfectly acceptable...But quoting more than two lines from a song’s lyrics in a book...might get you and your publisher in trouble” (McLeod). A few more examples of how inconstant copyright law is, are that a person can talk about a company in a private conversation but for it to be in a movie the director must get permission to use it and that in pop songs they can state the name of trademark companies for free but if an online show wants to use a logo of a company they have to get permission (McLeod). It can be seen that there is quite an issue with the way copyright law is applied. After seeing how inconstant the law is does that mean that it should be done away with?*

*In Scott M. Martin’s essay he defends the copyright law and shows why it is a very good*



thing. He claims that copyright protection “encourages innovation and creativity” (Martin). In his essay he discusses the differences between copyright protection and public domain. He thinks that copyright law is by far the better of the two choices. This is because if everything was in the public domain people would just make money of idea’s that have already been made they wouldn’t want to create new ideas (Martin). Some people’s argument for wanting copyright law to end earlier is that it would encourage the people that came up with the idea to create other things. Scott thinks that if those people really want people to create more new ideas then there should be incentives in the law its self for that sort of thing (Martin). Scott makes a convincing argument for why copyright is indeed a good thing that encourages creativity. Which is one thing that is highly valued.

Is copyright law worth the trouble it causes? According to Kembrew it is not because of its inconsistency. But on the flip side Scott believes it is because of all the creative that comes out of it. If it were not for copyright law creativity would be limited in scope. It might have its issues but is a required part of the law so that it can be assured that people will keep what is rightfully theirs.

### Comments on Sample Source-based Essay That Received a Score of 4

This competent response adequately explains the concerns evoked in each of the provided sources, pointing to both “how inconstant copyright law is” and how it encourages creativity. The essay also explains why the issues raised are important. It links the two sources by pointing out that McLeod and Martin are arguing from different perspectives. Both sources are used and cited when necessary. Organization and development of ideas are controlled as the response compares and contrasts the perspectives of the two writers on the same issues. The response exhibits general control of grammar, usage, and mechanics, but it contains some sentence fragments and other errors (e.g., “Which is one thing that is highly valued.”). With its adequate explanations and language use, this essay earns a score of 4.

### Sample Source-Based Essay That Received a Score of 2

Many artists are concerned about copyright because they want to be protected from other people stealing their work and passing it off as theirs. “why create something new if you can reprint or reuse something that already exists?” Copyright laws protect against this.

Copyright laws are confusing and “headache-inducing.” You can quote from another book in a book that you write but you can’t quote from a song. Artists don’t know what they can and can’t do. And copyright laws make “unrealistically high standards of originality” so it is hard for artists to create totally new things.

In conclusion, copyright laws help protect artists from people stealing their work while at the same time making it harder for them to create work that is original.

### Comments on Sample Source-Based Essay That Received a Score of 2

This response offers very little development. It identifies important concerns—the copyright protects artists from having their work stolen and that copyright laws are not inconsistent—and offers some explanation of them, but it provides weak support for the explanation, with very few reasons or details. The essay incorporates both of the provided sources, but it fails to cite or otherwise acknowledge its use of information taken from the sources. While its failure to acknowledge the use of source material keeps this essay from receiving a score higher than a 2, its lack of development also demonstrates that it is seriously flawed and would keep this essay at the 2-level even if outside sources were acknowledged.