

AIMS High School Sample Test and Think-Throughs

# High School

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## Introduction

This guide will help you make better response choices based on the knowledge that mastery of the grade-level standard provides.

AIMS sample tests are provided to give students experience in taking AIMS. The tests are not meant to be practice tests, but they offer a sample of the kinds of questions students will find on AIMS. The best way to make sure you have the knowledge necessary to Meet and Exceed on AIMS is to be in class, be prepared, and be on time to class each day. The basis of meeting proficiency on AIMS is learning in class and completing homework.

It is understandable that sometimes students get nervous when taking tests. They may need some help with test-taking strategies. In this document, you will not only be able to take an AIMS sample test for writing, but you will also find that some of the items have explanations of the process used for answering them. This will help you think through the items, just like you do in class. There are also two AIMS Writing responses with explanations of why they received the scores they have.

As you go through the sample test, please remember a few important facts.

- The AIMS Writing Sample Tests follow the AIMS Writing Blueprint for the 2003 Writing Academic Standards, but only represent one-third the number of items that are on the actual AIMS 5, 6, 7 and AIMS HS assessments.
- The best way to study for AIMS is to be sure you know and are able to do the grade-level performance objectives in each content area tested. Your teacher creates your lessons based on all of these grade-level writing standards.
- The activities contained in this document will give you experience in taking AIMS. It is not a practice test. Practice by completing the assignments your teacher gives you.
- Work through the sample test as if you were taking AIMS so you experience answering items in a test-like setting. Don't use support materials that are not allowed when taking AIMS.

When you look at answers for the sample items, you will also see the Strand, Concept, and Performance Objective that is being measured listed on the Answer Key. This is listed so you can see how it connects to the lessons your teacher creates from the Arizona Academic Standards. Read through the sample Think-Throughs and see how your thoughts and answers compare to the examples offered here.

Good luck and have fun!

AIMS HS Writing Sample Test

# Writing Sample Test

## Grade HS

Directions: Read the paragraph and then answer Numbers 1 through 3.

(1) If you use consecutive numbers, common names, or dictionary words, you are not safe from the software that hackers use to get password access to your accounts. (2) A combination of letters, cases, numbers, and symbols are recommended by most experts. (3) But how do you remember six passwords that look like this: im\$lv\*\*H94? (4) One new idea that is getting noticed by organizations that sponsor sites is a program that allows only a few common passwords to be registered on a site at any one time. (5) Hackers success at accessing multiple accounts is quite limited which makes the process cost prohibitive for them.

1 What is the **best** transition to use at the beginning of sentence 5?


- A Because
- B However
- C Nevertheless
- D Consequently

2 What is the **best** beginning for this paragraph?

- A How many passwords do you have?
- B Hackers are able to steal passwords.
- C Is your password safe from computer hackers?
- D Passwords that are dictionary words are not safe.

3 What is the correct way to punctuate Hackers in sentence 5?

- A Hackers'
- B Hacker's
- C Hackers's
- D correct as is

Go On 

Directions: Read the paragraph and then answer Numbers 4 through 6.

(1) Using the internet to do research is often more efficient than pouring over volumes of information when you have to write a research paper. (2) Of course, you do have to know which sites are trustworthy so you get valid information. (3) Learning to evaluate sites is just one more responsibility a researcher must assume. (4) You can trust sites that end in .gov or .edu. (5) Sites that end in .org are usually nonprofit organizations and while often reliable, there can be a political agenda or bias. (6) Another way to judge a site is to be sure the author's name is listed. (7) You can research the author to obtain his/her credentials which will give you more assurance that the information can be trusted.

4 What is the **best** way to combine sentences 4 and 5?

- A You can trust sites that end in .gov or .edu; sites that end in .org are usually nonprofit organizations and while often reliable, there can be a political agenda or bias.
- B You can trust sites that end in .gov, .edu, and .org, .org sites are usually nonprofit organizations and while often reliable, there can be a political agenda or bias.
- C You can trust sites that end in .gov or .edu, sites that end in .org are usually nonprofit organizations and while often reliable, there can be a political agenda or bias.
- D You can trust sites that end in .gov or .edu and sites that end in .org are usually nonprofit organizations and while often reliable, there can be a political agenda or bias.

5 What is the correct way to revise sentence 1?

- A Using the internet to do research is often more efficient than pouring over volumes of information when you have to write a research paper.
- B Using the internet to do research is often more efficient than poring over volumes of information when you have to write a research paper.
- C Using the internet to do research is often more efficient than poreing over volumes of information when you have to write a research paper.
- D correct as is

Go On 

6 Read the sentence.

Always acknowledge any possibility of bias in your research paper.

What is the **best** place to add this sentence?

- A between sentences 5 and 6
- B between sentences 2 and 3
- C immediately after sentence 4
- D immediately before sentence 7


Directions: Now read and answer Numbers 7 through 9

7 You are writing a descriptive essay. You notice that you used the phrase “very pretty” to describe both a young woman and a rainbow. What is the **best** word or phrase to use in place of “very pretty” to describe the rainbow?

- A really colorful
- B vividly colored
- C normally colored
- D seriously colorful

8 You are writing a letter to thank the guest speaker who spoke at your last student council meeting. What is the **best** way to begin the body of the letter?

- A Thank you for coming to our meeting and giving us your ideas.
- B Wow, were you ever a big hit on last Friday when you came to our meeting.
- C Your ability to win over even the boys on the student council was awesome.
- D Thank you for the informational and relevant speech on community service last Friday.

Go On 

**9** Which set of words and phrases is **best** to use in a business letter to show dissatisfaction?

- A** ticked off, want revenge, disgusted
- B** mad, seething with hate, ready to slug you
- C** confused, need an explanation, hoping to resolve
- D** don't care, giving up on you, expecting nothing more



## Grade HS AIMS Writing Answer Key

The Answer Key shows you the Strand, Concept, and Performance Objective that each item is addressing. This will help you and your teacher to identify which Concepts from the Arizona Academic Writing Standard that you may need to study more.

<b>1</b>	<b>2.2.4</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>2.2.2</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>2.6.7</b>	<b>A</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>2.5.1</b>	<b>A</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>2.6.11</b>	<b>B</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>2.2.3</b>	<b>A</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>2.4.1</b>	<b>B</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>2.1.2</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>2.3.4</b>	<b>C</b>

## AIMS Grade HS Writing Think-Throughs

The items on the next few pages are from the sample test you just finished. They have been worked out for you to show the thought process behind finding the answers.

As you go through them, see how your thoughts compare to the ones given. Not every item from the sample test will be shown in this way.

The number for each item matches the same number that is in the sample test. This way, if you got the item incorrect, you can compare your answers and go back to see what you may have done differently.

Then, after the Think-Through items, you will find an exemplar paper at score point 4 and one at score point 6. Study these papers and the annotations that go with each. If you want to look at more exemplar papers, ask your teacher for the web address where other annotated papers for your grade level are posted.

## Selected Items with Think-Throughs

**2** What is the **best** beginning for this paragraph?

Since the paragraph is about passwords and how easily they can be stolen, I will choose a first sentence that relates to these ideas. I know that the beginning sentence for a paragraph is often used to create interest in the topic, or it can be introducing the topic of the paragraph.

**Answer A** asks a question which is a good way to interest the reader. But the paragraph isn't really about the number of passwords a person has or doesn't have. I'll go on the next choice.

**Answer B** is a statement about hackers being able to steal passwords, so it could be introducing the paragraph. I won't know if it is the best beginning until I read the other choices.

**Answer C** is another question that will interest the audience. I think it introduces the topic of the paragraph well, too.

**Answer D** is a statement that is part of the information offered in the paragraph. There is no reason to single out the idea that dictionary words are not safe, so I will eliminate it.

Looking over the other 3 choices, I think that **the best choice is C**. It draws the reader in and it represents the topic. It is the best answer.

**4** What is the **best** way to combine sentences 4 and 5?

Sentences are combined using a conjunction, punctuation, or both. Sometimes the two sentences are revised and words are added or left out so that the new sentence flows smoothly and makes sense. Keeping all this in mind, I will look at each answer.

**Answer A** doesn't use a conjunction, but it does use punctuation. A semi-colon is put between .edu and Sites, and the capital S is changed to a lower case s. Now the sentence is combined and it doesn't ramble. I think this is the best answer so far.

**Answer B** does use a conjunction to join the two sentences. By putting the "and" in between .edu and Sites and changing the capital S to a lower case s, the sentences are combined. But because the second original sentence is already a complex sentence using "and" to connect the dependent and independent clauses, adding another "and" to create the new sentence makes it ramble and it is confusing.

**Answer C** also uses punctuation and no conjunction. The comma is placed between .edu and Sites. Then the capital S is changed to a lower case s. The sentence is combined and it doesn't ramble, but somehow it doesn't seem right. I don't think the comma is a strong enough punctuation mark to combine sentences without a conjunction. If there were an "and" following the comma, this choice would be correct.

**Answer D** adds a conjunction ("and"), punctuation (commas), and a revision of the original sentences. The first additional comma and conjunction combines .gov, .edu., and .org. Another comma is used following .org and the word "sites" is added following the second .org, revising the wording of the sentence but not changing the meaning. All of this is appropriate, but the combined sentence ends up rambling just as choice C does.

After reading all the answers and analyzing the combining of the two sentences in each, I am sure that **Answer A is correct**. A semi-colon is a strong enough punctuation mark to join two sentences without a conjunction.

**8** You are writing a letter to thank the guest speaker who spoke at your last student council meeting. What is the **best** way to begin the body of the letter?

The question is asking about a business letter. I will need to be sure that the beginning is appropriate for a formal communication. Also, in a business letter, the beginning should identify to whom I am writing and the reason for the letter.

**Answer A** thanks the person for coming and offering ideas. It is appropriate for formal communication, but it is vague and doesn't really connect with a specific person. This might be correct, but I will read on and compare it with the other answers.

**Answer B** is directed to a person, but it uses informal language like "Wow" and "a big hit." I don't think these words should be used in the beginning of a business letter.

**Answer C** is directed to a person, but it is not appropriate for business communication. I don't think this person's "ability to win over even the boys" is the best message for a business letter. It sounds biased.

**Answer D** clearly tells the reason for the letter by thanking this person for a "relevant speech on community service." This beginning is appropriate for a business letter because it is formal language and it tells both the purpose of the letter and identifies the person as a speaker.

After reading all the answers, I will **choose D** because it has appropriate language for business communication and I think it is the best way to begin the letter.

## Extended AIMS Writing Responses

On the next few pages, you will find student writing samples that have been scored with the AIMS Holistic Rubric Based on 6 Traits. There are also annotations, or explanations, that tell why the paper earned the score it has been given. Read the papers and the annotations to understand the qualities that a score point 4 paper (Meets) and a score point 6 paper (Exceeds) have.

To see additional sample papers, use this link:

<http://www.ade.az.gov/standards/aims/aimswriting/>.

### High School Prompt

Technology is advancing rapidly. Do you agree or disagree that technology has improved your life?

Write a persuasive essay in which you convince the reader of your position.

Read the score point 4 and score point 6 papers on the next pages. The papers are followed with an explanation of the skills that are shown in each.

## High School student paper scored with the Holistic Rubric Based on 6 Traits

Score Point 4

## Final Copy

Technology has become a big part in the lives of many people in our society today. We rely and depend on it to help us accomplish many tasks throughout the day. Whether those tasks be necessary or just for more pleasure, everyone uses technology, and for me personally, to say it hasn't improved my life, would simply not be true. These advancements have brought about many good things like cell phones, computers, and digital cameras.

Most everyone in America today owns a cellphone. It is very uncommon to see someone without one. They are very useful tools that allows for an easy way of communication regardless, for the most part, of where you are. It makes life more convenient because you no longer have to look for a pay phone, or any other means of getting in contact with someone, while you are out, away from your home telephone. Many parents want their children to have one so they have a quick and easy way of know where they are at all times. It is one of the most commonly used device in technology today and can really come in handy.

Another very widely used electronic is the computer. In today's society, it would be a rarity to find a home without at least one computer. I have found that they have made school work, such as reports and research papers, much easier. With the capability of internet access, you are able to find information and then type up your paper on the many available word processing programs. Many schools and

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businesses rely greatly on computers, and so many things are controlled by them. Without them our world would be a much different place to live.

Along with cell phones and computers, digital cameras are a very popular electronic. They are so useful in capturing a special moment that you want to remember or share with others. But unlike a regular camera, digital cameras give you the capability of seeing your picture immediately after you take it. With different types of cameras it allows you to take hundreds of pictures at one time and gives you a clear, vivid image. You are able to print good quality pictures right at home, saving you the trip of taking them to get developed.

All of these new technological advances have definitely changed our lives. It is a good kind of change, in my opinion that allows for new things to come about. If we keep moving forward and advancing like we currently are, who knows what kind of things we will be able to discover. Technology has improved our lives in giving us tools to enjoy as well as aids to help educate us.

## Grade HS Score Point 4, page 3

The writer has a recognizable beginning that offers the reader information about technology “in our society today” and mentions that “to say it hasn’t improved my life, would simply not be true.” Then the writer introduces three ideas to support the idea of technology improving his/her life. However, it isn’t until paragraph three that the reader is given any information about the effects of technology on the writer’s life. The reader may pause to wonder if the essay is about the effects of technology on the writer’s life or about technology in the form of cell phones, computers, and digital cameras. Organization and structure are somewhat formulaic but the reader can follow the development of the ideas. Good supporting details are offered in paragraph two, explaining why cell phones are “useful tools.” “It makes life more convenient because you no longer have to look for a pay phone, or any other means of getting in contact with someone, while you are out, away from your home telephone.” Paragraph 4 also offers applicable details: “the capability of seeing your picture immediately,” “clear, vivid image,” and “print good quality pictures.”

Words are generally functional but at times they do create interaction with the reader: “mere pleasure,” “can really come in handy,” and “capturing a special moment.” The writer uses a variety of sentences, including some with more complex structure: “Whether those tasks be necessary or just for mere pleasure, everyone uses technology, and for me personally, to say it hasn’t improved my life, would simply not be true.”

Control of standard conventions is noted. However, a broad range is not used.

While the essay is appropriate and acceptable, the confusing first paragraph and the weaker, more general support in paragraph two result in a score of 4.

Grade HS Student paper scored with the Holistic Rubric Based on 6 Traits

Score Point 6

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In today's society, technology is constantly changing, catapulting us into the future. But is this future what our society really wants it to be? Under the guise of innovation, hope, and security, technology is removing the essential skills needed for survival in the world. Technology has not improved my life, as I have fallen into the negative side of the advances of television, instant messaging systems, and the internet.

In the use of television, children and adults alike endlessly view a fake life happening in sitcoms and cartoons, but they don't actually live life out to the fullest themselves. Television takes away the imagination of a child and gives instead a cartoon to poison the child's own creativity. As these children grow into couch-potato teenagers, attention is left from important tasks at hand to the television through its gravitational force on their minds. This has happened to me on many the occasion in which I was that child, sucked in by the black hole of television. I would see the television on as I passed it and would forget what important task I was doing, be it homework or housework. Television had become an unbreakable habit for others, and had also ensnared me.

As television had taken my mind, instant messaging systems took away my ability to converse fluently with others in person. The art of conversation has been removed from society from the constant use of these systems as means of

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communication. With words and thoughts abbreviated to "lol" (laugh out loud) or "brb" (be right back), true conversation could not be practiced in these chat rooms. Every sentence is put to its shortest form, and the quality of the English language is forgotten. The delete button had been pressed on eloquent language, as it had on my ability to speak coherently in the outside world.

Instant conversation turns to instant gratification from the disparaging effects of the internet. Although aimed as a marketplace for ideas to flourish, the internet is the fast food line; ready to give your order, but not always the most nutritional/good information. The internet, where a myriad of sources lie, does not always carry the best information, but stressed students will not hesitate to take any information, as long as they get it quick. I have lived this scenario as stress to finish projects made me use the first information I found. Not quite the most correct information, it caused quite an unsatisfactory grade.

My life has not been improved, but has gone for the worse because of the negative effects of the technology of television, instant messaging systems, and the internet. Relying on it so willingly and hopelessly, I have had to break its bonds to become an independent thinker. The world is held in technology's vice; as technology flourishes, the world falls into the abyss of dependency.

## Grade HS Score Point 6, page 3

The writer has chosen to narrow the topic to the negative effects of technology on society, including anecdotal information that demonstrates committed interaction with the reader. The introduction is clear and leads the reader into the essay eagerly looking for explanation. The writer is adept at transitioning from one topic, one paragraph to the next: “As television has taken my mind, instant messaging systems took away my ability to converse fluently with others in person.” “Instant conversation turns to instant gratification from the disparaging effects of the internet.” The conclusion echoes the message communicated throughout: “The world is held in technology’s vice; as technology flourishes, the world falls into the abyss of dependency.”

Details, including the anecdotal pictures offered, are precise and specific. The reader can relate to being “sucked in by the black hole of television,” or relate to “. . . the quality of the English language is forgotten.” The analogy of the internet being quickly accessed information to a fast-food line in paragraph four is particularly strong in sending a message. Words and phrases are crafted into varied and complex sentences that enhance meaning. “I have lived this scenario as stress to finish projects made me use the first information I found. Not quite the most correct information, it caused quite an unsatisfactory grade.” Other words and phrases that stand out are “cartoon to poison the child’s own creativity,” “also ensnared me,” “my ability to converse fluently with others,” “The delete button had been pressed on eloquent language,” “break its bonds to become an independent thinker,” and “abyss of dependency.”

Conventions are excellently applied throughout the complex piece, with some creativity and few errors.