



MY Access! Writer's Workshop

Middle School Persuasive Writing

Prompt: Year Round Schooling

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Notes:

Prompt: Year-Round Schooling

Your school is considering a change to a year-round school schedule. The year-round schedule would have students attend school year-round with several three-week breaks as compared to the current school year calendar which begins in the fall and ends in the spring.

Do you feel that a year-round schedule is more or less beneficial to students than the current school calendar? Write a letter to your principal persuading him or her to accept your position on a change to a year-round school schedule.

As you write, remember your essay will be scored based on how well you:

- develop a multi-paragraph response to the assigned topic that clearly communicates your thesis to the audience.
- support your thesis with meaningful reasons and sufficient details.
- address the readers' concerns, opposing viewpoints, or counterarguments.
- organize your response in a clear and logical manner, including an introduction, body, and conclusion.
- use well-structured sentences and language that are appropriate for your audience.
- edit your work to conform to the conventions of standard American English.

Use any of the tools available to you, such as the **Checklist**, **Spellchecker**, or **Graphic Organizer**.

Year Round Schooling: Pros and Cons

Prompt: Year-Round Schooling

Your school is considering a move to a year-round school schedule. The year round schedule would have students attend school year-round with several three-week breaks as compared to the current school year calendar which begins in the fall and ends in the spring. Do you feel that a year-round schedule is more or less beneficial to students than the current school calendar? Write a letter to your principal persuading him or her to accept your position on a move to a year-round school schedule.

Overview:

The principal will meet with parents and administrators to decide if your school should have students attend school year-round. You will be divided into two teams consisting of 4 students. Team A is to convince those present that year-round schooling would be beneficial, while Team B is to give reasons why year round schooling would not be in the best interest of the school and the current schedule should remain in place.

Process:

The class will be divided into groups of eight students. Team A of that group will be looking for arguments that are for year round schooling. Team B of that group will be looking for arguments that are against year round schooling.

1. Each of the students on the teams will be given a job. Then, it is your responsibility to make sure that job is accurately done.
2. You will be looking for information that supports your argument. Once you have completed that task, you will come back together as a team to formulate your argument and write your letter.
3. When your argument is ready to be presented, you will present your argument to the Board. (The Board will consist of your fellow classmates and your teacher.)
4. After you have presented your argument, the Board will make a decision for or against school uniforms. Depending on the outcome of the vote, you will know if your team made the best argument.

Each student will be assigned a job to do for your team:

Researcher 1: Your job is to find information to support your argument. You will use resources that are both on-line and off-line.

Researcher 2: Your job is to find information that is against your argument. This will help your group defend your side.

Poll taker/Grapher: You will go around the school and/or the community and register opinions of against or for the issue. After you have your results, you will create graphs and charts by using a computer program for your presentation.

Budget Adviser: You will weigh the pros and cons concerning the cost of year round schooling vs. the current school schedule.

Once you have compiled your information and completed the charts and graphs, your team members will come together to formulate your argument. Then, your team will write the letter to the principal and also prepare to go before the Board to argue your side.

Internet Resource Sites:

Is Year-Round Schooling the Answer? -

<http://www.educationworld.com/admin/admin137.shtml>

Cost Effectiveness of Year-Round Schooling -

<http://www.bctf.bc.ca/ResearchReports/95ei02/>

Year Round Schooling-

<http://connect.familyeducation.com/webx/webx.dll?230@@.ee6c468>

<http://www.naesp.org/comm/prss31998.htm>

<http://www.bjup.com/resources/articles/hsh/0301.html>

Do year-round schools improve students learning? -

<http://www.bctf.bc.ca/ResearchReports/95ei03/>

Research on Year Round Schooling -

<http://www.edst.educ.ubc.ca/faculty/shields/yearround.html>

**Other resources can be located by using your search engine (www.google.com for example) and typing in year round schooling

Student Evaluation:

Name of Team Member:	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Participation -member did his/her share of the work		
Research -member's research was helpful in formulating your argument		
Discussion - member helped to make decisions during the planning of your argument		

Teacher Evaluation:

You will be graded on the following items:

Name:	20 points	15 points	10 points	5 points	1 point	0 points
Participation -observation and feedback from team members						
Research -turn in all of your notes, so you can be graded on doing your job						
Oral Presentation -clarity of argument and participation during the argument						
Visuals -easy to see, colorful, and understandable						
MY Access! Writing Essay - (On 6pt scale, score 6 = 20pts, score 5 = 15pts ...)						

Total score: _____
100

FOCUS CHECKLIST

Student Name:

Teacher Name:

Class:

WRITER'S ROLE	
AUDIENCE	
SUBJECT	
PURPOSE	
PATTERN (FORM)	
VOICE	
TONE	
CONTROLLING IDEA	

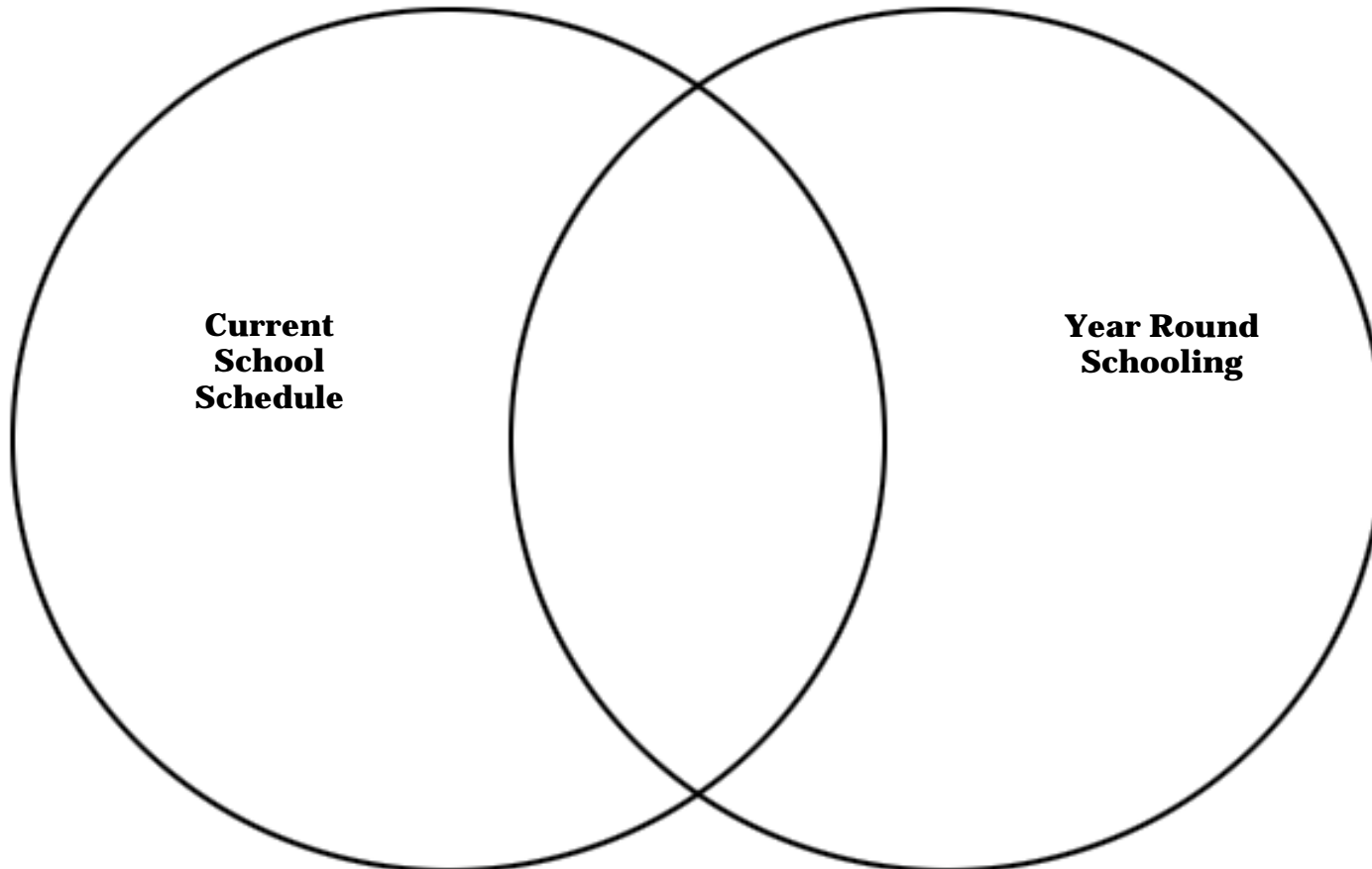
Venn Diagram

Teachers Name:

Student Name:

Class: Persuasive Writing

Prompt: Year Round Schooling



BECAUSE WRITING MATTERS

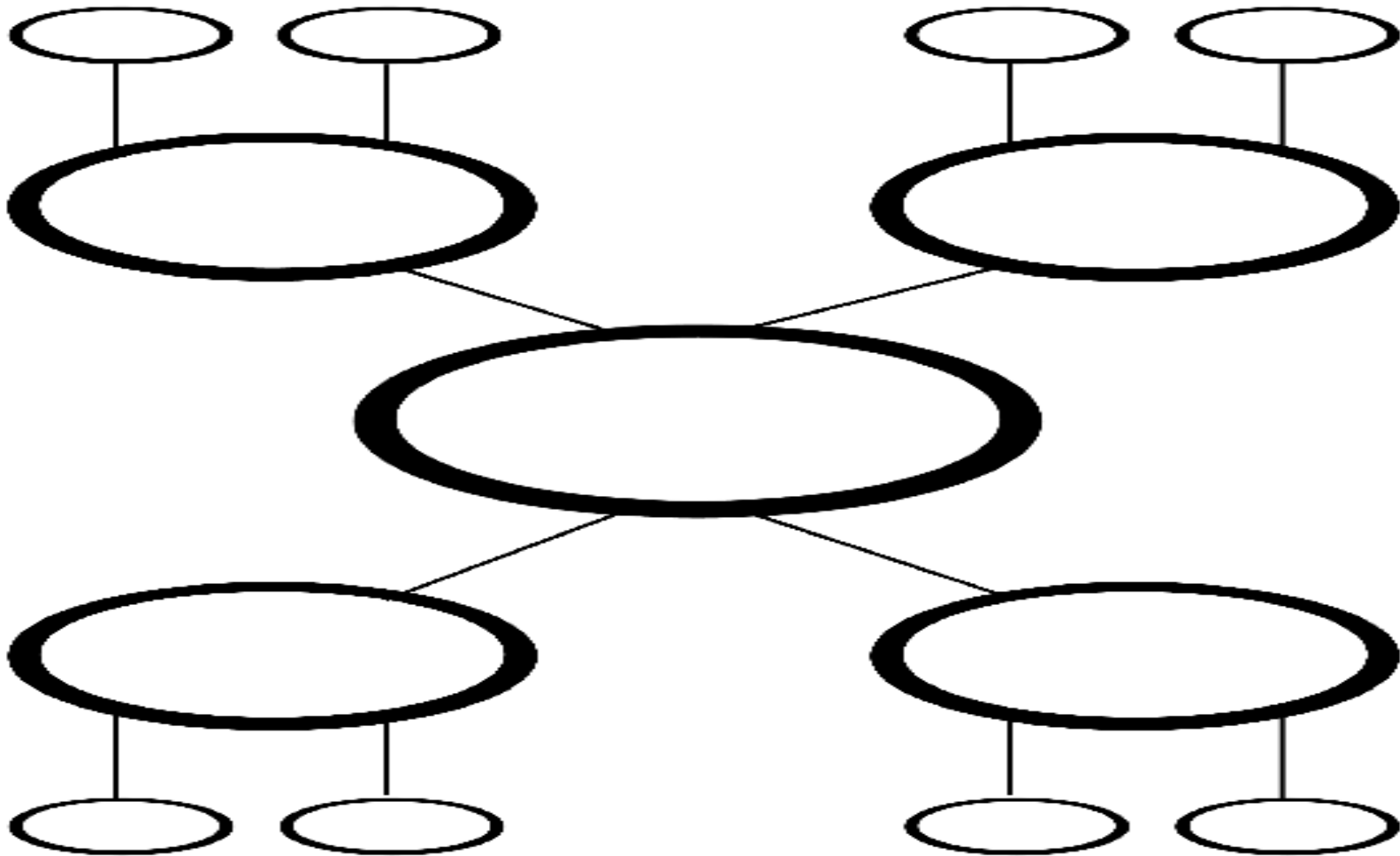
Cluster Web

Teachers Name:

Student Name:

Class: Persuasive Writing

Prompt: Year Round Schooling



Prompt: Year-Round Schooling

Your school is considering a change to a year-round school schedule. The year-round schedule would have students attend school year-round with several three-week breaks as compared to the current school year calendar which begins in the fall and ends in the spring.

Do you feel that a year-round schedule is more or less beneficial to students than the current school calendar? Write a letter to your principal persuading him or her to accept your position on a change to a year-round school schedule.

As you write, remember your essay will be scored based on how well you:

- develop a multi-paragraph response to the assigned topic that clearly communicates your thesis to the audience.
- support your thesis with meaningful reasons and sufficient details.
- address the readers' concerns, opposing viewpoints, or counterarguments.
- organize your response in a clear and logical manner, including an introduction, body, and conclusion.
- use well-structured sentences and language that are appropriate for your audience.
- edit your work to conform to the conventions of standard American English.

Use any of the tools available to you, such as the **Checklist**, **Spellchecker**, or **Graphic Organizer**.

Directions: Highlight or underline Ciara's position/thesis. Circle the reasons for her position. Bracket the details Ciara uses to support her reasons.

Ciara's Essay:

Dear Mrs. Roberts,

I think that the school should have a year round school because the kids in the school should have more learning because some kids dont know as much things as they should in the 6th grade. I think that we should have a shorter summer because kids loose things like how to figure out how to change decimals into percent and into fractions. I think that we should have a year round schooling because we could raise more money for the school and we would be able to get better things like more books.

Comment Box:

Directions: In the following two essays, highlight or underline the author's position/thesis. Circle the reasons for his/her position. Bracket the details the author uses to support each reason.

Larry's essay:

Dear, Mr. Bell

I understand that you are going to make school all year round because of students' grades and behavior. I understand that you are doing this to help the students out, but sir I do not want school all year round. Here are three reasons why. Children need time to relax and spend time with their family during the summer. My second reason is that teachers need time to take a vacation from dealing with those bad children. My last reason is that if a student is failing how would he or she attend summer school if there is school year-round.

My first reason to support the fact that I am against school being all year-round is that children need time to relax and spend time with their family members. Children do not like doing school work in the summer. The heat from the sun distracts them. Children do not like the mere fact of spending their time in school during the summer. This is important to me because I need to spend time with my family.

My second reason to support the fact that I am against school being all year-round is that teachers need time to relax in peace from dealing with those bad behaved students. Teachers are not trained to discipline children they are trained to teach children. Teachers can get a hard attack from dealing with bad behaved children because they probably have problems of their own to deal with.

My third reason to support the fact that I am against school being all year-round is that if students do not have a summer how would students go to summer school. If students do not go to summer school how would they pass to get to the next grade?

In conclusion those are my reasons why I am against school bring all year round. Most people would agree with my three reasons I stated in this essay. These three reasons are why I am against school being all year-round.

Score: _____

Feedback to the Writer:

Nina's essay:

Driana came home grumpier than ever. School is horrible she thought, the building is under construction, my friends are all enjoying a three month long vacation, and I wont even get to learn the things I want to learn. Is school supposed to be like that? Year-round is an inconvenience. It allows no time for the building to be prepared, or time for students to be with their friends, and it prevents them from developing skills you have to learn elsewhere.

The school needs a summer to repair the building. With the students there, it is hard to work to around them, and they will not be gone long enough to do the really big projects. You cannot just kick the students out while you rebuild or repair damage. So you will not be able to get it all done. With the small vacations you do give there is not enough time to do it. And let's not forget that the projects have to be right the first time. So without a summer you cannot have time repair the school.

Students will not have enough time to spend with their friends. They will spend a lot of their time on homework. And won't have time to just go hang out.. The students will be kept at home instead of getting out sometimes and enjoying themselves. Also without a summer the only friends that they will have are their classmates. Students need to get out. And with no time for a long vacation they will not have an opportunity to get out and meet new people. Spending time with friends is really important to them as it contributes to the development of their social skills.

A long summer is needed so the students can try to develop different skills on their own. They can not get out and try new things with school all the time. This could keep them from doing things they really enjoy. And once they are done with their junior and high school years they will not know what to do with their lives if they did not get to do things they like. Also they cannot get jobs while they are in school. Jobs will help the students develop their talents and teach them to be more responsible. Learning different skills for the future is extremely valuable.

Year-round school does not allow certain things to happen. Let's not destroy our students' opportunities to gain different skills, meet new people, and see new places by changing our school schedule to year-round.

Score: _____

Feedback to the Writer:

BECAUSE WRITING MATTERS

	Focus & Meaning The extent to which the response establishes and maintains an opinion/position/thesis an understanding of purpose and audience , and completion of the task.	Content & Development The extent to which the response develops ideas fully and using extensive, specific, accurate, and relevant details (<i>facts, examples, anecdotes, details, opinions, statistics, reasons, and/or explanations</i>).	Organization The extent to which the response demonstrates a unified structure, direction, and unity, paragraphing and transitional devices .	Language Use & Style The extent to which response demonstrates an awareness of audience and purpose through effective sentence structure, sentence variety, word choice and usage.	Mechanics & Conventions The extent the response demonstrates control of conventions, including paragraphing, grammar, punctuation, and spelling .
6	Very effective Focus & Meaning. Establishes and maintains an <i>insightful opinion/position/thesis</i> statement to effectively persuade the reader. Demonstrates a <i>thorough understanding</i> of the <u>purpose</u> and <u>audience</u> ; <i>completes all parts</i> of the task and may go beyond the limits of the task.	Very Effective Content & Development. <i>Effectively develops</i> arguments, using a <i>wide variety</i> of specific, accurate, and relevant <u>details</u> to support the writer's position. <i>Convincingly addresses</i> readers' <u>opposing points of view</u> or counterarguments.	Very Effective Organization. Demonstrates a <i>cohesive and unified</i> structure with an <i>engaging introduction</i> and a <i>strong conclusion</i> ; <i>effective</i> use of <u>paragraphing</u> and <u>transitional devices</u> throughout.	Very Effective Language Use and Style. Demonstrates <i>precise</i> language and word choice, a <i>defined</i> voice, and a <i>clear</i> sense of audience; uses <i>well-structured and varied</i> sentences.	Very effective control of Conventions & Mechanics. <i>Few or no</i> errors in grammar, mechanics, punctuation and spelling.
5	Good Focus & Meaning. Establishes and maintains a <i>clear opinion/position/thesis</i> statement to persuade the reader. Demonstrates a <i>general understanding</i> of the <u>purpose</u> and <u>audience</u> ; <i>completes most</i> parts of the task.	Good Content & Development. Develops arguments using <i>sufficient</i> specific, accurate and relevant <u>details</u> to support the writer's position. <i>Clearly addresses</i> readers' <u>opposing points of view</u> or counterarguments.	Good Organization. Demonstrates a <i>mostly unified</i> structure with a <i>good introduction and conclusion</i> ; <i>consistent</i> use of <u>paragraphing</u> and <u>transitional devices</u> .	Good Language Use & Style. Demonstrates <i>appropriate</i> language and word choice, with <i>some evidence</i> of voice and a <i>clear</i> sense of audience; uses <i>well-structured</i> sentences with <i>some variety</i> .	Good control of Conventions & Mechanics. <i>Few errors</i> in grammar, mechanics, punctuation and spelling that <i>do not interfere</i> with the message.
4	Adequate Focus & Meaning. Establishes an <i>opinion/ position/thesis</i> statement and <i>adequately attempts</i> to persuade the reader; demonstrates a <i>basic</i> understanding of the <u>purpose</u> and <u>audience</u> <i>completes many</i> parts of the task.	Adequate Content & Development. Develops arguments using <i>some</i> specific, accurate, and relevant details to support the writer's position. <i>Adequately addresses</i> readers' <u>opposing points of view</u> or counterarguments.	Adequate Organization. Demonstrates a <i>generally unified</i> structure with a <i>noticeable introduction and conclusion</i> ; <i>inconsistent</i> use of <u>paragraphing</u> and <u>transitional</u> devices.	Adequate Language Use & Style. Demonstrates <i>appropriate</i> language and word choice, with an <i>awareness</i> of audience and control of voice; generally uses correct sentence structure with <i>some variety</i> .	Adequate control of Conventions & Mechanics. Some errors in grammar, mechanics, punctuation and spelling that <i>do not significantly interfere</i> with the communication of the message.
3	Limited Focus & Meaning. States an <i>opinion/position/thesis</i> statement but may be <i>unclear or underdeveloped</i> ; demonstrates <i>limited</i> understanding of the <u>purpose</u> and <u>audience</u> ; <i>completes some</i> parts of the task.	Limited Content & Development. Develops arguments <i>briefly and inconsistently</i> , using <i>insufficient</i> <u>details</u> to support the writer's position. <i>Attempts to address</i> readers' <u>opposing points of view</u> or counterarguments.	Limited Organization. Demonstrates <i>evidence</i> of structure with an <i>uncertain introduction and conclusion</i> ; <i>lacks</i> paragraphing and some transitional devices.	Limited Language Use & Style. Demonstrates <i>simple</i> language and word choice, <i>some awareness</i> of audience and control of voice; relies on <i>simple</i> sentences with <i>insufficient</i> sentence variety and	Limited control of Conventions & Mechanics. <i>Several noticeable</i> errors in grammar, mechanics, punctuation and spelling that may <i>interfere</i> with the communication of the message.
2	Minimal Focus & Meaning. Demonstrates <i>little attempt</i> at stating an <i>opinion/position/thesis</i> . Demonstrates <i>minimal</i> understanding of the <u>purpose</u> and <u>audience</u> ; <i>completes few</i> parts of the task.	Minimal Content & Development. Develops arguments <i>incompletely and inadequately</i> , using <i>few</i> <u>details</u> to support the writer's position. <i>May consider</i> readers' <u>opposing points of view</u> or counterarguments.	Minimal Organization. Demonstrates <i>little evidence</i> of structure with a <i>poor introduction and conclusion</i> ; <i>little</i> evidence of <u>paragraphing</u> and <u>transitional</u> devices.	Minimal Language Use & Style. Demonstrates <i>poor</i> language and word choice, with <i>little awareness</i> of audience; makes <i>basic errors</i> in sentence structure and usage.	Minimal control of Conventions & Mechanics. <i>Patterns of errors</i> in grammar, mechanics, punctuation and spelling that substantially <i>interfere</i> with the communication of the message.
1	Inadequate or no Focus & Meaning. Demonstrates <i>almost no effort</i> at stating an <i>opinion/ position/thesis statement</i> and <i>little</i> effort is made to persuade. <i>Completes few or no</i> parts of the task.	Inadequate or no Content & Development. <i>Little or no attempt</i> is made to use <u>details</u> to support the arguments and the writer's position. <i>Does not consider</i> readers' <u>opposing points of view</u> or counterarguments.	Inadequate or no Organization. Demonstrates <i>no evidence</i> of structure with <i>no introduction or conclusion</i> ; <i>no</i> evidence of <u>paragraphing</u> and <u>transitional</u> devices.	Inadequate Language Use & Style. Demonstrates <i>unclear or incoherent</i> language and word choice, <i>no awareness</i> of audience, and <i>major errors</i> in sentence structure and usage.	Inadequate or no control of Conventions & Mechanics. <i>Errors so severe</i> in grammar, mechanics, punctuation and spelling that they <i>significantly interfere</i> with the communication of the message.

Prompt: Year-Round Schooling

Your school is considering a change to a year-round school schedule. The year-round schedule would have students attend school year-round with several three-week breaks as compared to the current school year calendar which begins in the fall and ends in the spring.

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As you write, remember your essay will be scored based on how well you:

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Ciara's Essay:

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Score Overview and MY Tutor Feedback

Holistic Feedback

Ciara, on a scale of one to six, your response to this assignment was rated a 2. Your response was evaluated on the basis of how well it communicates its message considering important areas of writing including focus and meaning, content and development, organization, language use and style, and mechanics and conventions.

A response that receives a score of two minimally communicates its message. Typically, a response at this level has an unclear purpose and lacks unity. The response shows little support of ideas presented with little use of examples, evidence or other supporting details. There is little evidence of an organizational pattern and an unclear sequence of ideas. Sentence construction shows considerable errors in sentence structure, usage and word choice, with considerable errors in grammar, mechanics, punctuation and spelling that substantially interfere with the communication of the message.

MY Tutor Writing Analysis

Your response was also evaluated in terms of five important traits of writing, focus and meaning, content and development, organization, language use and style, and mechanics and conventions. Each of the five areas was evaluated on a scale ranging from one to six.

Focus and Meaning

Ciara, on a scale of one to six, your response to **this assignment was rated a 2 for focus**. Focus relates to your ability to present a consistent, unified message and stay on topic.

Your focus is minimal. Typically, a response at this level demonstrates a limited understanding of the purpose and audience, but that may not be totally clear and/or may lack a continued focus on the main idea throughout the essay.

Ciara, now that you are ready to revise, try some of these ideas to improve the focus in your writing.

Revision Goal 1: State your opinion.

1. Your opinion is what you believe about the issue. Did you write your opinion in one sentence? Highlight this sentence in yellow.
2. If you did not write your opinion in one sentence, write it at the end of your introduction now. For example, if the issue is whether or not

students should wear school uniforms, your essay should clearly state whether you support this idea or not.

Example:

Before Revision: Some schools require boys and girls to wear uniforms. Some people want to have school uniforms, but we don't have uniforms at our school.

Frank's Strategy: *I did not clearly state my opinion on the issue. I need to add it now.*

After Revision: Some schools require boys and girls to wear uniforms. Even though my school does not require uniforms, I believe that having school uniforms is a good idea.

Frank's Reflection: *I clearly stated my opinion on the issue in one sentence: "Having school uniforms is a good idea."*

Revision Goal 2: Understand your purpose and audience.

1. Read the prompt and find the audience. Are you writing for friends and students, for parents or other adults, for newspaper readers?
2. Make sure the words you wrote in your essay are appropriate for your audience. For example, if you are writing to adults, you should NOT use slang or contractions.

Example:

Before Revision: Some schools require all kids to wear these uniforms. I think it's a really good idea to have school uniforms.

Frank's Strategy: *I included a contraction, "it's," and informal language, "all kids to wear these uniforms" and "really," that I need to replace with more formal language because I am writing to an audience of adults.*

After Revision: Some schools require boys and girls to wear school uniforms. Having school uniforms is a good idea.

Frank's Reflection: I replaced "all the kids wear these uniforms" with "schools require boys and girls to wear school uniforms," because "boys and girls" is more formal than "all these kids" and "school uniforms" is more specific than "these uniforms." I also removed the contraction "it's."

Content and Development

Ciara, on a scale of one to six, your response to this assignment **was rated a 2 for content and development**. Development relates to your ability to provide content that supports your main idea or controlling point and your ability to provide supporting details, examples and/or evidence.

Your development is minimal. Typically, a response at this level develops ideas incompletely or inadequately, using few examples, evidence or other supporting details.

Ciara, as you revise, you can improve your essay by including details to support your opinion. Try some of these ideas.

Revision Goal 1: Include reasons to support your opinion.

1. Reasons tell why you believe what you believe about an issue. Highlight, in blue, any reasons that support your opinion.
2. If you did not write many reasons, add them now. Tell why you believe what you believe!

Example:

Before Revision: Some schools require boys and girls to wear school uniforms. Having school uniforms is a good idea.

Annie's Strategy: *I stated my opinion in the last sentence, but I did not give reasons to support my opinion. I need to add these now.*

After Revision: Some schools require boys and girls to wear school uniforms. Having school uniforms is a good idea.

If everyone wears the same uniform, then students do not have to worry about wearing the latest fashions.

In addition, families can save money by not having to buy new clothes.

Annie's Reflection: *I added two reasons why I believe having school uniforms is a good idea. I also put each reason in its own paragraph.*

Revision Goal 2: Include details to support your reasons.

1. Highlight, in blue, the reasons that support your opinion. Highlight, in green, the facts or details that support each reason.
2. Now, add more details to explain your reasons. Details can be specific examples, experiences, or facts.

Example:

Before Revision: Some schools require boys and girls to wear school uniforms. Having school uniforms is a good idea.

If everyone wears the same uniform, then students do not have to worry about having the latest fashions. In addition, families can save money by not having to buy new clothes.

Annie's Strategy: *I gave two reasons for my opinion, but I did not include any supporting details. I need to include these now.*

After Revision: Some schools require boys and girls to wear school uniforms. Having school uniforms is a good idea.

If everyone wears the same uniform, then students do not have to worry about wearing the latest fashions. As a result, students will not judge each other based on the clothes and shoes they are wearing.

Families can save money by not having to buy new clothes. Some families spend hundreds of dollars every month to buy new clothes when they could save this money for their children's college tuition.

Annie's Reflection: I added details to explain my two reasons.

Organization

Ciara, on a scale of one to six, your response to this assignment **was rated a 2 for organization**. Organization relates to your ability to present your ideas in a logical and ordered fashion.

Your organization is limited. Typically, a response at this level shows little evidence of organizational structure and sequence of ideas.

Ciara, here are some things you can do to improve your organization.

Revision Goal 1: Give your essay a good introduction.

1. Did you write your opinion in one sentence at the end of your introduction? Highlight your opinion sentence in yellow. If you do not have an opinion statement, add one now.
2. In your introduction, you should also give background information to explain the issue to your reader. Highlight, in blue, the background information you include. Now, add more important information. (HINT: You can find some important information in the prompt.)

3. Finally, you should grab your reader's attention in the introduction. Make the first sentence of your introduction a question or an unusual statement to interest your reader.

Example:

Before Revision: Many turtles live near the road. We should work together to save the turtles.

Oscar's Strategy: *I included an opinion statement at the end of my introduction, but I did not give any background information or details to grab my reader's attention. I need to add these now.*

After Revision: Watch out for those turtles! Many turtles live in the pond near Highgate Road in North Sutton. Every summer, hundreds of turtles die trying to cross the road. We should work together to save the turtles.

Oscar's Reflection: *First, I added an exclamation, "Watch out for those turtles!" to grab my reader's attention. Next, I added important background information about the problem: "...hundreds of turtles die trying to cross Highgate Road."*

Revision Goal 2: Give your essay a strong body and conclusion.

1. Transitional words help show how your ideas are related, or connected. Highlight your transitions in orange. You should include transitions between paragraphs and between sentences. Use the word bank to help you.
2. Now, underline your conclusion. If you do not have a conclusion, add one now. Your conclusion may be a restatement of your opinion. It should leave the reader with something to think about or tell him or her what to do next.

Example:

Before Revision: The turtles cross the road to lay their eggs, but many turtles do not survive the trip. The number of turtles in the pond gets smaller every year. Turtles crossing the road can cause accidents, too. Drivers slam on their brakes and swerve to avoid the turtles. Sometimes they hit other cars instead.

Oscar's Strategy: *I need to include transitions between paragraphs and sentences. I also need to add a conclusion.*

After Revision: In the Spring, turtles cross the road to lay their eggs, but many turtles do not survive the trip. As a result, the number of turtles in the pond gets smaller every year.

In addition, turtles crossing the road can cause accidents. Drivers often have to slam on their brakes and swerve to avoid the turtles. Sometimes they hit other cars instead.

We must all work together to save the turtles. We can do this by building a small tunnel for the turtles under Highgate Road. Please sign our petition to support this cause.

Oscar's Reflection: I added transitions between paragraphs and sentences. I also added a conclusion where I tell my reader how to help save the turtles.

Language Use and Style

Ciara, on a scale of one to six, your response to this assignment **was rated a 2 for language use and style**. Language use relates to the decisions you make as a writer to create "style" in your writing. Style is created through sentence variety, word choice and usage.

Your language use and style is minimal. Typically, a response at this level shows major errors in sentence style, usage and word choice.

Ciara, now that you are ready to revise, try some of these ideas to help improve language use and style in your writing.

Revision Goal 1: Use descriptive and persuasive words effectively.

1. Highlight, in green, the words that answer the questions who, what, when, where, why and how. Then, use your five senses to describe these words in more detail. Use the word bank to help you.
2. Underline words or phrases you use too often and replace them with synonyms (words that mean the same) or more precise words. Use the thesaurus to help you.
3. You can also make your writing more effective by using strong, persuasive words (such as *you must*, *you should*, *you need to*, *right now*, *don't wait*). Use the word bank to help you.

Example:

Before Revision: Many turtles live in the pond near the road. When the turtles cross the road to lay their eggs, drivers often do not see them. As a result, many

turtles do not survive the trip. We can work together to save the turtles on the road.

Larry's Strategy: *I overused the phrases "the road" and "the turtles," and I did not describe the turtles or the pond very well. I need to use different words and stronger sensory details. In the last sentence, "We can" is weak. I need to add more persuasive words to make my writing stronger.*

After Revision: Many painted turtles live in Derby Pond near the road. When the turtles cross the road to lay their eggs, drivers often do not see them. As a result, many turtles do not survive the trip. We must act now and work together to save these remarkable turtles.

Larry's Reflection: *I added sensory details to describe my ideas. Because I repeated the word "road," I replaced it with "pavement." Finally, I changed "We can" to a stronger, more persuasive phrase, "We must act now," to make my writing more powerful.*

Revision Goal 2: Use well-structured and varied sentences.

1. Highlight short sentences in pink. Highlight long sentences in purple. Combine short sentences using conjunctions (and, or, but) and separate long sentences with more than one idea into two or more sentences.

Example:

Before Revision: The turtles cross the road to lay their eggs. Many of the turtles do not survive the trip. The turtles on the road cause accidents, too. Drivers slam on their brakes to avoid the turtles. When drivers swerve to avoid the turtles, they risk driving into oncoming traffic.

Larry's Strategy: *I need to vary the lengths of my sentences so that I have both long and short sentences.*

After Revision: The turtles cross the road to lay their eggs, but many of the turtles do not survive the trip. In addition, turtles can cause accidents. Drivers slam on their brakes and swerve to avoid the turtles.

Larry's Reflection: *I combined short sentences using conjunctions "but" and "and."*

Mechanics and Conventions

Ciara, on a scale of one to six, your response was rated a 2 for mechanics. Mechanics has to do with your ability to apply the rules of standard American English,

including grammar, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

Your use of mechanics is minimal. A response at this level contains many errors in grammar, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

Ciara, the better the mechanics, the easier it will be for the reader to enjoy and understand your writing.

Revision Goal 1: Eliminate errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, and mechanics.

1. Read your writing. You may want to read out loud (to yourself) so that you can hear many of your mistakes and correct them.
2. Correct any spelling errors using the spell checker. Then, make your reader SMILE by doing the following:

Sentences: Make sure each sentence has a subject and a verb (an action).

Before Revision: The turtles in the road.

Marcy's Strategy: *I noticed that this sentence does not have an action. I need to add a verb to make this fragment a sentence.*

After Revision: The turtles cross the road to lay their eggs.

Marcy's Reflection: I added a verb to make the sentence fragment a complete sentence.

Marks: End each sentence with a **punctuation mark**.

Before Revision: Drivers slam on their brakes and swerve to miss the turtles crossing the road instead of hitting the turtles drivers end up hitting other cars does this seem safe to you

Marcy's Strategy: *I noticed that this paragraph does not have any punctuation. I need to put punctuation marks at the end of each sentence to help my reader know when a thought begins and when a thought ends.*

After Revision: Drivers slam on their brakes and swerve to miss the turtles crossing the road. Instead of hitting the turtles, drivers sometimes end up hitting other cars. Does this seem safe to you?

Marcy's Reflection: *I put punctuation marks at the end of each sentence. If the sentence was a statement, I added a period. If the sentence was a question, I added a question mark.*

Indents: Indent when you begin a new paragraph.

Before Revision:

Many painted turtles live in Derby Pond near the road. When the turtles cross the road to lay their eggs, drivers often do not see them. As a result, many turtles do not survive the trip. We must act now and work together to save these remarkable turtles.

Marcy's Strategy: *I noticed that I did not indent the beginning of this paragraph. I need to indent each paragraph.*

After Revision:

____ Many painted turtles live in Derby Pond near the road. When the turtles cross the road to lay their eggs, drivers often do not see them. As a result, many turtles do not survive the trip. We must act now and work together to save these remarkable turtles.

Marcy's Reflection: *I indented the beginning of the paragraph.*

Letters: Start each sentence with a **capital letter**.

Before Revision: the turtles cross the road to lay their eggs, but many of the turtles do not survive the trip.

Marcy's Strategy: *I need to capitalize the words at the beginning of sentences.*

After Revision: The turtles cross the road to lay their eggs, but many of the turtles do not survive the trip.

Marcy's Reflection: *I changed the lowercase letter in the beginning of my sentence to a capital letter.*

Editor: Click on MY Editor for more ways to improve your writing.

Revision Plan (Sample)

Name: Ciara Maguire
Class: Persuasive Writing
Prompt: Year Round Schooling

My Goals

Organization: I must state my position clearly and place it at the end of my introduction

Content and Development: I must develop each of my reasons with more examples and facts.

Writing Strategy

Organization:

Since I don't have an introduction, I must write one and put my position at the end of the introduction.

Content and Development:

I must read my essay again and circle each reason I give for year-round schooling. Then, I must separate the reasons so that each one becomes the topic sentence for a different body paragraph. Then I must think hard and write enough examples and facts to support each one of my topic sentences so that each body paragraph will persuade my audience, the principal, that year-round schooling is better.

Reflection

I realize now that all I did for my essay was state my position and write down some reasons. Even when I look back at my cluster Web, I realize that I didn't support any of my reasons. I just listed them. My essay is really just the beginning of my ideas.

Additional Sample Essays

Directions: Using the 6-point rubric, score each student's response, and give a reason for each score by taking language from the rubric that best describes the response.

Chad's essay:

Dear Mr. Natti,

Year round schooling would suck! Who wants to be in school for twelve month? Only an idiot or geet would want to do that. I don't want to do it. That is the best reason of all. I hate school.

Score: _____

Feedback to the Writer:

Tim's essay:

Dear Mrs. Jones,

I am writing to peresuade you to turn the school to a year round school year. The year would be better if school was all year because we culd learn more and it would be more educational. Also sumer vaction is fun but over that time period we forget everything we learned durin the school year.

Score: _____

Feedback to the Writer:

Courtney's essay:

Dear Mrs. Roberts,

I think that the school should have a year round school because the kids in the school should have more learning because some kids dont know as much things as they should in the 6th grade. I think that we should have a shorter summer because kids loose things like how to figure out how to change decimals into percent and into fractions. I think that we should have a year round schooling

because we could raise more money for the school and we would be able to get better things like more books.

Score: _____

Feedback to the Writer:

Robert's essay:

Dear Mrs. Terrell

I think year round school is a terrible idea because I have had it before and it really was bad. In the summer you can't have swimming lessons. You have to cancel vacations and family trips and for the boys there is no summer camp. I think if you had the students vote the overall result is that more than half of the students would vote against it. If you still will do year round school the students will be mad and sluff school a lot more often.

Sincerely, Robert

Score: _____

Feedback to the Writer:

John's essay:

Dear Mrs Fugal,

I think year round school is a good idea , Because when you get vacation you will have longer breaks then schools that aren't year round . Year round school will have more education since they don't have a summer break they won't forget what they have learned so they would be smarter. The kids get 4 to 5 weeks of f of school after at least 2 months

The vacations will be longer because they don't have summer break .They need some time off so when they do have time off they have a long time off . They get at least 4 to 5 week of and on Christmas they get even more off then we do . Think about it wouldn't it be nice to have a long time of f of school and not have to worry about forgetting any thing that you have learned.

Having year round school would be nice you wouldn't have to worry about forgetting what you learned from before. Year round school would be so cool you could pick to have year round school.

Score: _____

Feedback to the Writer:

Ben's essay:

Dear Mr. Jones,

I don't think there should be year-round school because I like school the way it is. What is the point of going to school for 13-14 weeks then getting off 3-4 weeks. It's like summer vacation but it isn't as long.

That would mean that there would be less vacation time, and most people like to go on nice long vacations to relax and enjoy the nice life. With the measly 3-4 weeks it only gives u time to go to an amusement park and a hotel.

Thats why you should keep the schools amount of weeks, and months the same. Also if your parents are divourced and you are supposed to go to your father or mothers house over the summer you wouldn't be able to because you only have 3-4 weeks.

Score: _____

Feedback to the Writer:

Matt's essay:

Dear Principal of Local High,

I have written this letter to inform you that year-round school is a bad idea. I have recommended that it should stay the same as is. The reason I recommend this is it would not help us learn more if we have this year-round schooling. This will be less beneficial to students because when summer arrives it will be too hot for any students to pay attention to school work. Also we cannot memorize more of the work if we have breaks every now and then. Having year-round schooling may look like a good idea but it is not because of these negative impacts for this idea.

The reason that it is not making us learn more of our education is because if we have breaks here and there it would not make us focus on our work. We would be thinking of the next break that comes in a few weeks and when we come back from our breaks we would worry about the next break that arrives and not try to work on our school work. The reason it should stay the same is if having year-round schooling would make it worse to concentrate on our work habits.

My second reason is the heat of summer. Heat is very hard to concentrate when doing work. If we have, year-round schooling summer will slow us down and we can nearly concentrate on our school work. Even though if we have breaks in summer, it will still slow us down because of the afternoon when it is hottest at the time. This is the reason that we have summer vacation.

The last statement and final reason is having too much breaks is not good. Having breaks every now and then will not let us memorize the things we did at school before we had the break. Doing so, trying to memorize things that had been issued 2-3 weeks ago and repeating it again after the break is hard to do.

In conclusion I personally think we should stay with the way it is, having year-round schooling is a little difficult to manage because we have to memorize the things we do, go through the heat in summer, and also trying to learn more when given little time to do before a break starts and ends. This is the reason that year-round schooling is not a good idea.

Score: _____

Feedback to the Writer:

Beth's essay:

To Principal Smith,

"Ah great! There is no seat left. This classroom is over crowded! Something needs to be done here." "Is Local School being considered a move to a year-round school schedule?" "I hope so."

In the consideration of moving Local School into a year-round school schedule; many agreements were made in this idea. I myself absolutely agree with this proposal. Local should shift to a year-round school schedule for several reasons. Why?

Well, first and for most, with approximately 3000 students and about 200 classrooms; apparently Local is over crowded. The average size of students in a normal classroom would have at least twenty- thirty students in each. But, this is

not the case at Local; approximately there are over forty students in each class. In excess of the past year of 2003, many Local students have been complaining that, they have to sit or stand without a desk, due to crowded classrooms. For instance, a student Lilly Rindall says, “ In the first two weeks of school, I had to sit in the corner without a desk, because the classroom was crammed with over forty-two students.” Consequently, if Local were in a year-round school schedule, this would have not happen. Primary; there would be less student in a classroom, second; the school would not have to spend extra money for additional chairs or desks, and third the school will be a lot cleaner. In other words, there will be fewer trashes; decreases the amount of school vandalism and the number of burglaries.

Secondly, a crowded classroom means much more students. Along with this, students who are in jam-packed classes are more likely to get little or no individual attention from the teacher. In other words, when a student is having trouble in schoolwork he or she is not able to get the individual attention from the teacher because they are engaged with other students. Hence, this to the students leads to low test scores and less understanding of the subject. Take the case of Sara Smith who says, “ I believe that my teacher never really pays attention to me, because she focuses more on students who are disruptive rather than a student who did not understands the lesson.” However, if Local were in a year-round school schedule all of this difficulty would no longer exist. For example, year-round schedule reduces a student stress, dropout rates, and discipline problems, but also increases student retentions and achievements. According to Proponents of year-round schools, they claimed that there are educational benefits for students, reflected in improved test scores.

Last but not least, year-round school schedules allows students and families to take vacations at times that are more advantageous, avoiding crowds and inflated rates. A Local student Juan Martinez say, “ I think it will be a great idea if Local turns into a year-round schedule because students get to have more vacations!”

I firmly support the decision to move Local High School to a year-round school schedule. This decision will result in a much better school life for students, the school, and teachers.

In other words, with a year-round schedule Local High School will have fewer students in classes enabling students to get more individualized attention from their teachers, and there will be a significant reduction or elimination in the amount of vandalism taking place. Lastly, students and

families will be able to go on more vacations throughout the year, no longer limiting them to the traditional two-month vacation break.

Sincerely,

Beth Jameson

Score: _____

Feedback to the Writer:

Mirna's essay:

Dear Mr. Graves,

School bells in September, 3 months of summer vacation. A wonderful tradition passed down in American schooling systems. All to be ruined by a year-round schedule. I have recently heard that you're considering putting A.W. Local school on a year-round calendar. Like many students, I don't like the idea. There are so many negative drawbacks to a year-round school system. Most students just disagree with it because they don't like the idea of losing their summer vacation. Don't get me wrong I too love my summer vacation but, I also have more deeper and important reasons. Hopefully with the ideas that I am going to bring up in this letter, I will be able to persuade you to change your mind and stay with the great American tradition.

My family is a very important part of my life. I love spending time with them whenever I get the chance. My summer vacation is a great time to do that. Everyone is able to take a vacation and we can all get together and have a great time. My cousins are also out of school then. We go the beach, take long family vacations, have reunions and picnics, and best of all spend quality time together. Unfortunately that may all come to an end if we have year-round school.

Speaking of people and their jobs. Some students and teachers have summer jobs. As you probably know teachers like to make a little extra cash in the summer since they're not working. Who wouldn't? If you ask any teenage they will all tell you that they also love earning some extra summer spending money. Once again with a year-round school schedule that wouldn't be possible. Business's certainly won't hire anyone during the shortened amount of time we would possibly have off in year-round schooling. Also when you think about it students could amass more knowledge if we stay with the regular school system because, they could get a summer job and learn about what they may or may not want to do for a career. It would also teach them responsibility.

When it comes to responsibility I certainly learn a lot about it at summer camp. Every summer I go to a military camp. I really enjoy it, they teach me respect, responsibility and we have a lot of fun in the process. I would hate to lose all of that over year-round school. It means a lot to me, and to many other children. It's also another way besides school to learn.

I truly believe that it doesn't make sense to break a tradition that has worked out so magnificently in the past for no important reason. Also to deprive all of the children their wonderful summer "journey." When you look at it in my perspective it's more than summer vacation it's a life long experience. Please don't take away the opportunity for all of the students to grow and broaden their horizons on their summer vacation.

Hopefully with the vast amount of strong and sensible reasons I have allotted throughout this letter, I was able to persuade your decision against year-round schooling.

Sincerely, Mirna Jenkins

Score: _____

Feedback to the Writer:

James's essay:

Dear Mr. Smith,

I am a student here at Local High School and I would like to express my approach on the supposed year-round schooling. Personally, I wouldn't want L.H.S to become a year-round school, although, if it did become year-round, I wouldn't really mind. There are possibilities on the advantages of becoming a year-round school, but there this idea also has its disadvantages. From the information that I have accumulated, students receiving their education at a year-round school are in class the same quantity of days just as we in a nine-month school year. Therefore, this wouldn't really qualify as for having more time in classes.

But really, what is the difference between the traditional nine-month school year compared to year-round schooling? In a year-round schedule, students are given a three-week break every few months, that is way much too vacation.

The reality that they receive further vacation time than us is correct, everyone wants more and longer vacation periods, and it is notorious throughout our society.

With that being acknowledged, it doesn't really matter because even though they're still in school the equivalent quantity as the traditional year, it's understood that they're abiding to the designation "year-round."

Students here on campus complain that it's overcrowded during nutrition and lunch, but that could be altered by changing schedules. For example, East Coast

schools assign their high school students a specific lunch period, like 33% of the student population would have lunch 4th period, another 33% 5th period, and the rest of the population during 6th period. That though would inflict with nutrition needs. It's visible to see how year-round school would lessen the population, but many of the students like knowing that there's a great deal of people throughout the campus in every corner they see.

Usually during winter and summer vacation, students tend to fail to recall what they have learned the previous year when they have returned. It's crucial the first few weeks of session because of that factor. Year-round facilitates continuous learning. The students are not ever out of school for a long period of time. As a result, the students forget less over the shorter breaks, and teachers spend less time reviewing pre-vacation material. Another real benefit of year-round education is that schools can offer an extra session of remedial and enrichment classes to some of the students between sessions.

Our school is known to have the biggest high school campus on the west of the Mississippi River. We really do have a huge campus. Most school districts choose year-round schooling as a cost-cutting measure. For example, with one group of students always on vacation, a school that was built for 2,000 students can serve as many as 5,000. This lets school districts with a low budget handle a growing student population and save millions of dollars in construction costs. Additionally, although the price of operating a year-round program is more expensive, there is also a reduction in per-pupil costs, which would help us keep a stable budget. Again, another advantage.

As far as achievement goes, the results are mixed and inconclusive. However, students in year-round schools that have everyone on the same track have shown improved achievement scores over those in traditional schools.

Overall, students, parents, and teachers generally have positive attitudes toward year-round schooling over time. In conclusion, I suppose I'm more pro-year-round rather than con-year-round.

Sincerely,

James Patella

Score: _____

Feedback to the Writer:

Notes:

Teacher Answer Key:

Larry: 4

Nina: 5

Chad: 1

Tim: 1

Courtney: 2

Robert: 2

John: 3

Ben: 3

Matt: 5

Beth: 6

Mirna: 6

James: 6