



Extended Response Tip Sheet

This tip sheet is based on the 8-part video series How to Pass the GED Extended Response (You can find this on YouTube published by ProLiteracy). The tips on this handout paraphrase the strategies reviewed in the existing multimedia resources.

1. Students have 45 minutes to respond to the prompt. One effective way students can organize their time is:
 - Spend the first 15 minutes reading the material and taking notes
 - Take 25 minutes planning and writing the essay
 - Save 5 minutes to check the essay for clarity at the end

It may be helpful to give students a chance to practice doing each of these activities in the recommended time with sample prompts.

2. Students can use the highlighter function to identify important details. Highlighting makes it easier to reference back to the passages without wasting time searching for specific evidence. For example, students may use one color to highlight strong evidence and another color for weak evidence.
3. If having a timer counting down is stressful, students may hide the timer. If hidden, students should still check their time remaining occasionally to make sure they are on track.
4. Students should aim to write 4-7 paragraphs that are each 3-7 sentences for their extended response, resulting in essays about 300-500 words long.
5. Students will remember more if they take notes while reading. Their notes should also make it easier to analyze the two arguments.
6. To identify an author’s position or claim, students should ask themselves, “What does the writer want me to do or believe about this topic?”
7. To identify evidence, students can ask themselves, “Why should I believe the author’s claim?”
8. Students need strong reasons and evidence to make a good argument, which means they need to identify specific passages and details to support their reasoning.

STRONG EVIDENCE INCLUDES:

WEAK EVIDENCE INCLUDES:

Specific examples	Unclear references
Statistics	Outdated studies
Facts	Unnamed experts
Results from polls, surveys, or studies	Irrelevant details
Precise details (names, results, recent dates)	Flawed, confusing, or vague reasoning
Expert opinions	Personal opinions (not based in fact)

This table is based on information in the video “How to Determine Which Position is Best Supported (<https://youtu.be/qnWQoOf-ezQ>)

9. Students should explain how both authors make their arguments and write about why one argument is stronger than the other.
10. Use statements like “This is true because of [these facts]” to show the logical connection between the claim and the evidence. Avoid personal attacks, claiming one action will lead to a series of bad events, or other rhetorical fallacies.
11. Students need to choose the strongest 2 or 3 reasons they support an author and fully explain why these reasons are valid.
12. The essay’s claim must clearly state which of the two positions is stronger and be stated like a fact. A claim is not an opinion.
13. Focus the response on the passages and NOT on personal opinions. Students must demonstrate which argument is the best supported even if that position is different than their own.
14. The goal of an argument is to convince the readers that the claim is correct.
15. Sketch out an outline for your argument. Consider how each point will transition to the next point. Students might organize evidence from strongest to weakest or weakest to strongest. Whatever the order, it should flow logically and always connect evidence back to the main claim. Details only matter when they are tied to your reasoning.
16. Evidence can be incorporated into the body paragraphs by:
 - Fully describing or restating the facts or opinions presented by each position
 - Citing evidence by briefly referencing the details/facts of a specific point
 - Quoting the exact words of an author.
 - Keep in mind that quotes should be brief, stated in quotation marks, and students should *explain in their own words* how each quote supports the main argument.
 - Refuting or disproving bad evidence
17. Use transition words and phrases to connect ideas and link one idea to the next

RELATIONSHIP OF IDEAS	POSSIBLE TRANSITIONS
Examples	For example, such as
Cause and Effect	Because, so, therefore
Order of Importance	Most important, first, second, mainly
Additional Evidence or Similar Importance	And, also, in addition
Compare and Contrast	But, still, on the other hand, in contrast, rather

This table is based on information in the video “How to Write a Fully Supported Response” (https://youtu.be/fileCTV_tHQ)

18. Students need to generate their own sentences. Don’t copy lines or quote the passages without explaining how those details support the claims of the extended response.
19. After writing, reread each paragraph to make sure the point is clear.
20. Essays are scored like a draft, but students should write a draft that is well-organized, logical, and focused.

21. A conclusion should (briefly) repeat the initial claim and supporting evidence.
22. Students should save a few minutes to check their writing, correct grammar, rewrite any confusing sentences.
23. Rereading their extended response will help students self-evaluate to know if their essay makes sense, has missing or misused words, and clearly states their claim along with strong reasoning.
24. Check for all three parts of the essay: Intro, body, conclusion, and effective transitions between each paragraph.
25. Check for a variety of sentence types (long and short, compound and simple), because having a variety of sentences makes an essay easier to read.
26. Remove any slang or abbreviations to maintain a more professional writing style.
27. Don't worry too much about spelling. Students won't lose points for misspelling a word as long as the readers can guess what they meant. Fix confusing sentences or poor grammar first!
28. This is the rubric scoring guide:
 - 1 – Creation of arguments and use of evidence (2 points)**
 - Addresses the prompt
 - Clearly states a claim
 - Evaluates the arguments presented in the passages
 - States which argument the student thinks is better and why
 - Chooses specific details from the passages that clearly support their position
 - 2 – Development of ideas and organizational structure (2 points)**
 - Fully explains and develops their ideas
 - Organizes the response so that it has a clear beginning, middle, and end
 - Creates an effective progression, or sequence, of ideas
 - Links ideas with appropriate signal words or transitions
 - Selects language that furthers your purpose and shows audience awareness
 - 3 – Clarity and command of standard English Conventions (2 points)**
 - Uses correct verb forms and subject-verb agreement
 - Uses the correct pronouns
 - Uses homophones correctly
 - Capitalizes correctly
 - Uses apostrophes and other punctuation correctly
 - Written in clear, complete sentences
 - Uses a variety of sentence types and reads fluently