

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# How to Answer a Constructed Response Question

## Step 1: State your claim.

Your claim is your answer to the question. Your claim should . . .

- **echo the question. In other words, it should turn the question into a statement.**

*Example A: Imagine you are answering the question, “According to the article, what is the best way to eat chocolate?” Your answer should start like this: “According to the article, the best way to eat chocolate is . . .”*

*Example B: Imagine you are answering the question, “Does the author think it’s ever okay to lie?” If your answer is yes, your answer could start like this: “The author thinks that sometimes it’s okay to lie . . .”*

- **include reasoning or explanation. So if you are answering a yes-or-no question, you need to do more than say yes or no—you also need to provide some explanation or reason for your answer. If you are answering an open-ended question, you need to provide a brief summary or explanation of your ideas. Your reasoning or explanation should be one to three sentences.**

*Example A: According to the article, the best way to eat chocolate is take your time and enjoy the chocolate with all five of your senses.*

*Example B: “The author thinks that sometimes it’s okay to lie, if you are lying to make someone feel good and no harm will come from your lie.”*

## Step 2: Provide text evidence with commentary.

Text evidence is details from the text that support your claim—in other words, details from the text that show why your claim is true.

Commentary is where you explain WHY the text evidence supports your claim. Your commentary should include key words from your claim. Text evidence . . .

- **can be in the form of a direct quotation or paraphrase.**
- **should be cited. In other words, you need to make it clear to the reader where the quote or paraphrase came from. Give the page number and, if it’s not obvious, the author’s name and/or the name of the article.**

Here are two examples of text evidence with commentary:

*Example A (using a direct quote): “Before you bite the chocolate, take a moment to look at it,” the author writes on page 5. “Admire its glossy shine. Then lift it to your nose and take a deep inhale. What do you notice?” (p. 5) Here, the author is telling readers to take their time before biting into the chocolate, and to use their senses of sight and smell to enjoy the chocolate.*

For more on using text evidence, see Scope’s “How to Use Text Evidence” reference sheet.

*Example B (using a paraphrase): According to the author, it's okay to tell your friend you're sure no one at the party noticed the spinach stuck between her teeth, because there is nothing to be done about it now and maybe you can relieve some of your friend's embarrassment (p. 14). Here, the author is saying that it's OK to tell a small lie that makes someone feel better and doesn't do any harm.*

### **Step 3: Write a conclusion.**

**A conclusion is 1-3 closing sentences that leave your reader with an insightful thought.** A conclusion could . . .

- **state whether you agree or disagree with the author's point of view, and why.**
- **state whether you think the author's reasoning is sound or unsound, and why.**
- **tell how the topic you've been writing about connects to your life.**

Here are two examples of text evidence with commentary:

*Example A: Perhaps eating chocolate in the slow, thoughtful way the author suggests could lead to a deeper enjoyment of it—but eating chocolate this way would also require an awful lot of patience and self-control!*

*Example B: Is the author right? I think so. Being completely honest about everything at all times is very likely to lead to some hurt feelings, and why hurt someone's feelings if it's not necessary?*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# How to Use Text Evidence

When you write about something you have read, you need to use **text evidence**—that is, details from the text—to support the points you are making. You can use text evidence in the form of a direct quotation (the author’s exact words) or a paraphrase (a restatement of what the author wrote). You also need to explain WHY that text evidence is relevant.

## Here are some tips for using text evidence:

### 1. Quote or paraphrase.

When using a **direct quote**, copy down the exact words from a sentence. Surround a direct quotation with quotation marks.

To **paraphrase** is to put something written or spoken by someone else into your own words. You don’t change the meaning of what the other person wrote or said, just the wording. A paraphrase is not surrounded by quotation marks.

### 2. Make it clear where your evidence comes from.

Identify who wrote or said what you are quoting or paraphrasing. This is called “**citing your source**.” Include a page number.

#### Words to help you:

*according to (the author),  
(the author) claims,  
suggests, states, writes,  
reports, describes, implies,  
explains, argues, declares,  
observes, notes, reveals,  
remarks*

### 3. Explain why your text evidence is relevant.

Include a sentence that makes it clear how the text evidence supports your idea. Reread the information you quoted or paraphrased and ask yourself, “So what?”

#### Words to help you:

*(the author) says this  
because, this proves that,  
this exemplifies how, this  
confirms, demonstrates,  
describes, explains,  
illustrates, implies,  
suggests*

Now let's look at two sample paragraphs. The first uses text evidence correctly.  
The second uses text evidence incorrectly.

### SAMPLE 1

Riding the world's tallest and fastest roller coaster, Kingda Ka, is a unique experience. According to author Mario Martinez in his book Roller Coasters of the World, Kingda Ka accelerates to 128 miles per hour in less than three seconds, going straight up at a 90-degree angle (18). "I have ridden hundreds of coasters," he writes. "But none of them were as terrifying as this one" (20). This suggests that Kingda Ka stands out among roller coasters as particularly intense.

This paragraph looks great! There are quotation marks around the direct quote, the writer tells us where the paraphrase and the quote came from, and the writer explains how her text evidence supports her statement that riding Kingda Ka is a unique experience. Hooray!

### SAMPLE 2

Riding the world's tallest and fastest roller coaster, Kingda Ka, is a unique experience. According to Mario Martinez, Kingda Ka accelerates to 128 miles per hour in less than three seconds, going straight up at a 90-degree angle. "I have ridden hundreds of coasters. But none of them were as terrifying as this one."

In this paragraph, neither the quote nor the paraphrase is cited correctly. Who is Mario Martinez? Which page in what book or article did the paraphrase and quote come from? The writer also fails to explain how her text evidence supports her statement that riding Kingda Ka is unique. She just plopped her text evidence into her paragraph.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Constructing a Response

**Directions:** Read "What I Really Want for My Birthday" and complete the activity on page 27. Then follow the steps below to write a response to the question on page 27.

→ See *Scope's* "How to Answer a Constructed-Response Question" for tips and information about how to complete this activity.

Question from page 27:

Why are some kids asking friends to give to charity instead of buying birthday gifts?

## Step 1: Write your claim.

Complete the sentence below to write your claim in response to the question.

Some kids asking friends to give to charity instead of buying birthday gifts because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

## Step 2: Provide text evidence with commentary.

Write two details from the article that support your claim. You can write them in the form of direct quotations or paraphrases. Include a citation for each detail. Explain how each detail supports your claim.

**Detail 1:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Sentence explaining how this detail supports my claim:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Detail 2:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Sentence explaining how this detail supports my claim:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### **Step 3: Write a conclusion.**

Wrap it all up. End your paragraph with a strong sentence that will give your readers something to think about. One option is to refer to your central claim. Or come up with an idea of your own!

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Now it's time to put it all together. And guess what? You've already done the hardest part! All that's left is to take what you just wrote and put it together into one flowing paragraph. Write your final response on a separate sheet of paper.

**Remember to:**

- Use transitions between sentences.
- Read your paragraph to make sure your ideas are clear. Revise as needed.
- When you are satisfied with your paragraph, read it again to make sure there are no spelling or punctuation mistakes.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Go to Scope  
Online to listen  
to the words  
and definitions  
read aloud.

# Vocabulary:

## "What I Really Want for My Birthday"

- 1. burden (BUR-dn)** *noun or verb*; A burden is something that is carried—especially something that is heavy or difficult to carry. *Burden* can refer to a physical object or to something difficult that you have to deal with, such as a responsibility. If you have a lot of younger siblings, you might take on the burden of watching them when your parents are busy.

As a verb, *burden* means "to put a heavy load on something or someone" or "to cause someone to deal with something difficult." If your friend realizes that he has been complaining to you a lot, he might say, "I'm sorry, I don't mean to burden you with all of my problems."

- 2. charitable (CHAR-i-tuh-buhl)** *adjective*; Charity is generosity and help toward those in need. Organizations that help those in need are called charities. *Charitable* is used to describe someone or something that is involved or concerned with charity. If your grandmother volunteers at a soup kitchen and donates money to a local homeless shelter, she is charitable.

- 3. contrary (KON-trer-ee)** *adjective*; *Contrary* means opposite. If Lisa and Jeremy have contrary views on who should be elected class president, they disagree on who should be class president.

- 4. deprive (dih-PRAHYV)** *verb*; *Deprive* means "to take something away from or keep from having." If your smartphone breaks, you may be deprived of texting for a while.

- 5. noble (NOH-buhl)** *adjective*; If someone is noble, he or she acts according to admirable moral qualities, such as kindness, honesty, and courage. *Noble* can also be used to describe an act. For example, it would be noble of your sister to offer to do your chores for you when you are very busy with homework.

*Noble* can also mean "of high rank." During the Middle Ages, noble families were those that had high status in the king's court because they were related or connected to the royal family. Noble families were usually wealthy and had special privileges.

- 6. waft (WAFT)** *verb*; To waft is to float or be carried through the air. You know the cookies you're baking are almost done when their sweet scent begins to waft through the house.

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**Directions:** On this page, list any other words from the article whose definitions you are not sure about. For each word, use context clues to try to figure out the meaning. Then look up the word in a few different dictionaries. Discuss the primary meaning of the word with your teacher or another adult. Then write a definition for the word and one example sentence using the word.



# Vocabulary Practice

## "What I Really Want for My Birthday"

**Directions:** Fill in the circle next to the best answer to each question below.

1. Which would more likely be considered a **burden**?

- Ⓐ having to take your little brother to his piano lesson every Thursday after school
- Ⓑ receiving free tickets to an Ariana Grande concert

2. Which word is most similar in meaning to **contrary**?

- Ⓐ same
- Ⓑ conflicting

3. Who could be described as **charitable**?

- Ⓐ Hazel, who donates \$5 of her allowance to a cancer research foundation each month
- Ⓑ Emily, who starts her own jewelry-making business

4. Which is more likely to **waft** into a room?

- Ⓐ a couch
- Ⓑ the smell of freshly baked bread

5. Who could be described as **noble**?

- Ⓐ a doctor who volunteers to work without pay once a week at a clinic that offers free health care to people who can't afford to pay
- Ⓑ a criminal who skillfully robs a bank

6. Which sentence uses the word **deprive** correctly?

- Ⓐ After the hurricane knocked down several power lines, the town was deprived of electricity for 3 days.
- Ⓑ "Don't deprive my cell phone!" I pleaded with my mom after she threatened to take my phone away.

**Directions:** Write two sentences that each include a word or words from the list of vocabulary words on pages 1-2 of this activity (including the words you chose).

7. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## “What I Really Want for My Birthday” Quiz

**Directions:** Read “What I Really Want for My Birthday.” Then answer the questions below.

- Which of the following statements expresses a central idea of the article?
  - Animal shelters are in need of basic supplies.
  - Ancient Romans honored their gods with gifts.
  - Birthday parties are an American tradition.
  - Many kids are asking for donations to causes they care about in place of birthday gifts.
- On page 27, Mackenzie Carro writes that “most agree that giving up gifts is a noble sacrifice.” Context clues reveal that *sacrifice* most closely means
  - an offering of something of value for the sake of something else.
  - the act of handing something over on demand.
  - the taking of another person’s property without permission.
  - the act of separating something into parts.
- Which of the following lines supports the idea that kids giving up their birthday gifts is a trend?
  - “‘You still get to have cake!’ Abbie says.” (p. 27)
  - “Abbie is one of a growing number of kids who are giving up their birthday presents . . .” (p. 26)
  - “But there was one thing missing: a table full of presents.” (p. 26)
  - “You can give back on any day of the year, so why do it on the one day that is supposed to be about celebrating you?” (p. 27)
- Carro’s tone as she writes about young people giving up their birthday presents could be described as
  - relaxed and humorous.
  - questioning and confused.
  - impressed and approving.
  - bossy and annoyed.
- Which of the following lines supports your answer to question 4?
  - “There were no presents because Abbie told her friends not to bring any.” (p. 26)
  - “Today, birthday parties and presents are a standard part of childhood.” (p. 27)
  - “The trend is admirable and a chance for young people to make a difference in a meaningful way.” (p. 26)
  - “Abbie and her friends danced in the pool as a DJ spun their favorite songs.” (p. 26)
- Based on information in the article, with which statement would Abbie Wallace most likely agree?
  - Giving is better than receiving.
  - Each day is a gift.
  - Big gifts come in small packages.
  - The greatest gift in life is friendship.

### Constructed-Response Question

**Directions:** Write your answer to the question below on the back of this paper or type it up on a computer.

- In your opinion, do the advantages of giving up birthday presents to support a charitable cause outweigh the disadvantages? Use text evidence from “What I Really Want for My Birthday” to support your answer.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## “What I Really Want for My Birthday” Quiz

**Directions:** Read “What I Really Want for My Birthday.” Then answer the questions below.

1. Which of the following statements expresses a central idea of the article?
  - (A) Animal shelters are in need of basic supplies.
  - (B) Ancient Romans honored their gods with gifts.
  - (C) Abbie Wallace had a unicorn-themed party.
  - (D) Many kids are asking for donations to causes they care about in place of birthday gifts.
2. On page 27, Mackenzie Carro writes that “birthday parties and presents are a standard part of childhood.” Context clues reveal that *standard* most closely means
  - (A) common.
  - (B) exciting.
  - (C) rare.
  - (D) unnecessary.
3. Which of the following lines supports the idea that giving up birthday gifts is a trend?
  - (A) “‘You still get to have cake!’ Abbie says.” (p. 27)
  - (B) “Abbie is one of a growing number of kids who are giving up their birthday presents . . .” (p. 26)
  - (C) “But there was one thing missing: a table full of presents.” (p. 26)
  - (D) “You can give back on any day of the year, so why do it on the one day that is supposed to be about celebrating you?” (p. 27)
4. Carro’s tone, or her attitude, as she writes about young people giving up birthday presents could be described as
  - (A) humorous.
  - (B) confused.
  - (C) impressed.
  - (D) annoyed.
5. Which of the following lines supports your answer to question 4?
  - (A) “There were no presents because Abbie told her friends not to bring any.” (p. 26)
  - (B) “Besides, giving a birthday present can be just as special as receiving one.” (p. 27)
  - (C) “The trend is admirable and a chance for young people to make a difference in a meaningful way.” (p. 26)
  - (D) “Abbie and her friends danced in the pool as a DJ spun their favorite songs.” (p. 26)
6. Based on information in the article, with which statement would Abbie most likely agree?
  - (A) Giving is better than receiving.
  - (B) Each day is a gift.
  - (C) Big gifts come in small packages.
  - (D) The greatest gift in life is friendship.

### Constructed-Response Question

**Directions:** Write your answer to the question below on the back of this paper or type it up on a computer.

7. What are the advantages of giving up birthday presents for a charitable cause? Use text evidence from “What I Really Want for My Birthday” to support your answer.