

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?

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Constructing a Response

Directions: Read "Mac and Cheese Mania" and complete the activity on page 21. Then follow the steps below to write a response to the question on page 21.

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

Question from page 21:

What contributed to the popularity of macaroni and cheese in the United States?

Step 1: Write your claim.

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

Macaroni and cheese became popular in the United States because of _____

_____.

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!

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.

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“Mac and Cheese Mania” Quiz

Directions: Read “Mac and Cheese Mania.” Then answer the questions below.

1. On page 20, Allison Friedman writes that Thomas Jefferson “served as the principal author of the Declaration of Independence.” As it is used in the sentence, what is the best definition of *principal*?
 (A) known about by many people
 (B) first in order of importance; leading or main
 (C) very useful or helpful
 (D) in charge of a school
2. Mac and cheese became widely popular in America in the 1930s because it was
 (A) exotic and luxurious.
 (B) new and stylish.
 (C) imported and expensive.
 (D) affordable and convenient.
3. Which lines BEST support your answer to question 2?
 (A) “The first pasta-and-cheese recipes were written in Italy in the 1300s” and “macaroni and cheese is as beloved as ever.”
 (B) “Cheap and filling, mac and cheese was the perfect meal for hard times” and “a dinner for four people that you could whip up in nine minutes—and for just 19 cents!”
 (C) “There’s even an official Macaroni and Cheese Day” and “but macaroni and cheese hadn’t had its big breakthrough yet.”
 (D) “But in many parts of the country, mac and cheese was still unknown” and “for centuries, however, only the very rich could afford it.”
4. On page 21, the author writes, “There’s even an official Macaroni and Cheese Day.” This line
 (A) encourages readers to celebrate Macaroni and Cheese Day.
 (B) emphasizes how affordable macaroni and cheese is.
 (C) shows how popular macaroni and cheese is.
 (D) helps readers understand why Americans love macaroni and cheese.
5. Which of the following expresses a central idea of the section “All-American Classic”?
 (A) Macaroni and cheese is no longer as popular as it once was.
 (B) Macaroni and cheese is still a very popular dish in America today.
 (C) Macaroni and cheese is affordable.
 (D) Kraft is the most popular kind of macaroni and cheese.
6. Which detail would be LEAST important to include in a summary of the article?
 (A) Today, mac and cheese remains enormously popular.
 (B) Wealthy travelers brought mac and cheese to America from Europe.
 (C) Jefferson helped America gain independence from Great Britain.
 (D) For hundreds of years, only the rich could afford to eat mac and cheese.

Constructed-Response Question

Directions: Write your answer in a well-organized response.

7. Explain how macaroni and cheese has changed since it was first introduced to the United States. Support your answer with text evidence.

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"Mac and Cheese Mania" Quiz

Directions: Read "Mac and Cheese Mania." Then answer the questions below.

- On page 20, Allison Friedman writes that Thomas Jefferson "served as the principal author of the Declaration of Independence." *Principal* most closely means
 (A) well-known.
 (B) main.
 (C) minor.
 (D) extra.
- A key reason that mac and cheese gained popularity in America in the 1930s is that it was
 (A) imported.
 (B) nutritious.
 (C) elegant.
 (D) affordable.
- Which line BEST supports your answer to question 2?
 (A) "Today, Kraft sells nearly 1 million boxes of mac and cheese *each day*." (p. 21)
 (B) "Cheap and filling, mac and cheese was the perfect meal for hard times." (p. 21)
 (C) "Wealthy Americans were dazzled by this luxurious food from Europe." (p. 21)
 (D) "From there, the creamy treat began to make its way across Europe." (p. 21)
- On page 21, the author writes, "Today, Kraft sells nearly one million boxes of mac and cheese *each day*." This line
 (A) encourages readers to eat more mac and cheese.
 (B) emphasizes how affordable mac and cheese is.
 (C) shows how popular mac and cheese is.
 (D) helps readers understand why Americans love mac and cheese.
- The section "All-American Classic"
 (A) describes the history of mac and cheese.
 (B) explains how popular mac and cheese is today.
 (C) explains the origins of mac and cheese.
 (D) provides more information about Thomas Jefferson.
- Which detail would be MOST important to include in a summary of the article?
 (A) St. Louis is a city in the state of Missouri.
 (B) Thomas Jefferson's dinner guests considered themselves lucky.
 (C) For hundreds of years, only the rich could afford to eat mac and cheese.
 (D) Jefferson helped America gain its independence.

Constructed-Response Question

Directions: Write your answer in a well-organized response.

- Explain how macaroni and cheese has changed since it was first introduced to the United States. Support your answer with text evidence.