

TSIA2
English Language Arts
and Reading
Test Specifications
(Version 1.4)

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the THECB by
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Change log

v1.1

- Updated NRS EFL descriptor labels

v1.2

- Updated categorical score labels

v1.3

- Revisions to address feedback from the THECB, including changes to terminology, updates to Table 3, and clarifications to routing flow

v1.4

- Revisions to address line edits from the THECB

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Introduction and test purpose

The Texas Success Initiative Assessment 2 (“TSIA2”) is a revision of the TSIA (“TSIA1”) designed, developed, and maintained by the College Board on the ACCUPLACER® platform. In 2012, the College Board entered into a contract with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to create and support TSIA, with the goal of improving student success rates in Texas colleges. In 2019, the College Board was awarded a contract to create an updated version of TSIA to serve that goal going forward.

This document briefly describes the English language arts and reading (ELAR) portions of TSIA2 and includes revision design goals, overviews of the tests, and supporting tables and figures.

TSIA2 ELAR revision design goals

The TSIA2 test revision is intended to accomplish the following goals:

- Creating integrated classification and diagnostic testing so that test takers move seamlessly through the suite of assessments in a single experience and so that test takers who are placed in the not college ready category don’t end testing without receiving actionable feedback
- Combining the separate multiple-choice Reading and Writing components of the TSIA1 placement tests so that test takers taking the new TSIA2 college readiness classification (CRC) test have a single, seamless testing experience
- Shifting from the two classification scores and three scoring categories of TSIA1 (college ready, developmental education, adult basic education [ABE]) to a single college readiness classification score and two scoring categories (college ready, not college ready)
- Reducing the number of constraints on item selection relative to TSIA1, allowing the TSIA2 adaptive testing engine to perform more flexibly and efficiently
- Combining the separate multiple-choice Reading and Writing components of the TSIA1 diagnostic tests so that test takers taking the new TSIA2 diagnostic test have a single, seamless testing experience
- Continuing to provide diagnostic test takers with actionable information about academic strengths and weaknesses across a range of content categories
- Integrating TSIA1’s standalone ABE testing components into TSIA2 diagnostic testing, providing a sufficient span of item difficulty in the new diagnostic test to cover the range previously addressed by separate TSIA1 diagnostic and ABE testing (i.e., six levels of National Reporting System for Adult Education [NRS] Educational Functioning Levels [EFL]) and addressing the performance expectations outlined in the Texas Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) Content Standards 2.0
- Calibrating the new diagnostic test to the same ability scale (theta) as the CRC Test
- Documenting, confirming, and, where necessary, improving alignment with current Texas academic and adult education literacy standards, specifically (1) Texas College and Career Readiness Standards (2018), (2) Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), English III (2017), (3) AEL Content Standards 2.0, and (4) NRS EFL
- Reducing the number of items delivered in placement/CRC and diagnostic testing

Overview of the TSIA2 ELAR suite

Suite overview

The TSIA2 ELAR suite consists of

- a single multiple-choice college readiness classification (CRC) test, providing (in conjunction with the Essay Test) information regarding test takers' college readiness in reading and writing;
- a single multiple-choice Diagnostic Test, providing information regarding test takers' academic strengths and weaknesses in reading and writing; and
- a constructed-response Essay (WritePlacer[®]).

Test takers move in a seamless fashion between the various tests in the suite, based on the routing framework (see “Scores, routing, and results,” below). Test takers must complete all required testing before any information on their performance is yielded.

The CRC Test includes reading- and writing-focused components, as did TSIA1, but unlike its predecessor the CRC is delivered to test takers as a singular testing experience.

The Diagnostic Test also includes reading- and writing-focused components and subsumes the separate TSIA1 DE Diagnostic and ABE tests while encompassing the same range of item difficulty as the prior two tests. Like the CRC, the new Diagnostic Test is delivered to test takers as a singular testing experience.

The Essay Test (WritePlacer) is a direct assessment of writing in which test takers generate a response to a provided prompt.

The TSIA2 tests are typically computer delivered. The multiple-choice CRC and Diagnostic Tests are adaptive, meaning that test takers are routed to subsequent items based on their performance on preceding items. The Essay Test is machine scored. A range of accommodated versions is available for students with documented disabilities that may prevent them from taking the computer-delivered assessments; tests in these accommodated formats are fixed-form linear (i.e., not adaptive).

Scores, routing, and testing outcomes

Scores

The TSIA2 ELAR suite has the following scores, routing paths, and testing outcomes.

CRC. The multiple-choice CRC Test yields a score from 910 to 990. The test has a single college readiness classification score, established by a standard-setting process, and two scoring categories: college ready and not college ready.

Important: While CRC Test takers' scores fall into either a college ready or not college ready range, test takers do not receive a college ready or not college ready designation based solely on CRC performance. The final determination, as the discussion in "Routing" and "Testing outcomes," below, makes clear, is made in conjunction with performance data from the Diagnostic and/or Essay Tests. Indeed, test takers must complete all routed testing to receive any information regarding their performance.

Diagnostic. The multiple-choice Diagnostic Test yields a diagnostic profile that includes the following information:

- (1) A classification into one of five diagnostic levels closely aligned to the NRS EFL. For guidance regarding the NRS EFL and the relation of the NRS EFL to the TSIA2 diagnostic levels, the following can be used:
 - a. Level 2: Beginning basic (subsumes Level 1: Beginning literacy, for reporting purposes)
 - b. Level 3: Low intermediate
 - c. Level 4: High intermediate
 - d. Level 5: Low adult secondary
 - e. Level 6: High adult secondary
- (2) A proficiency descriptor (basic, proficient, or advanced) that identifies the test taker's relative academic strengths and weaknesses in two content strands:
 - a. Text Analysis and Synthesis (reading focused)
 - b. Content Revision and Editing for Conventions (writing focused)

Each proficiency descriptor is accompanied by statements describing typical student performance in the content strand for the given descriptor.

Essay. The Essay Test yields a single holistic score ranging from 1 to 8. The test has a single college readiness classification score. In addition to the reported holistic score, feedback is provided on the six dimensions on which responses are evaluated, each of which is considered essential to a well-written essay: purpose and focus, organization and structure, development and support, sentence variety and style, mechanical conventions, and critical thinking.

Routing

Within tests. Within the computer-delivered multiple-choice CRC and Diagnostic Tests, test takers are adaptively routed. (Accommodated versions of these are fixed-form linear tests.) The Essay Test is a single task and is therefore not adaptive.

Between tests. The following section narrates the TSIA2 ELAR suite routing framework. The same information is represented visually on page 20 in [Figure 1. Routing flow](#).

(1) CRC Test

All test takers are administered the CRC Test first.

- a. If the CRC Test yields a score in the college ready range (i.e., a score at or above the college readiness classification score), then test takers are routed to the Essay Test.
- b. If the CRC Test yields a score in the not college ready range (i.e., a score below the college readiness classification score), then test takers are routed to the Diagnostic Test.

In the “b” scenario, a path to Essay remains should test takers attain a diagnostic level of 4 or higher; see below.

(2) Diagnostic Test

Test takers are routed to the Diagnostic Test if the CRC Test yields a score in the not college ready range. Test takers then experience one of two scenarios.

- a. If performance on the Diagnostic Test yields a diagnostic level of 4 or higher, then test takers are routed to the Essay Test.
- b. If performance on the Diagnostic Test yields a diagnostic level of 3 or lower, then test takers have not demonstrated college readiness on the Diagnostic Test. These test takers receive an individual score report (ISR) indicating that they are not college ready.

(3) Essay

Test takers may be routed to the Essay Test in one of two ways:

- a. If the CRC Test yields a score in the college ready range, then test takers are routed to the Essay Test.
- b. If the Diagnostic Test yields a diagnostic level of 4 or higher, then test takers are routed to the Essay Test.

Important: While all test takers receiving a diagnostic level of 4 or higher are routed to the Essay, only those test takers receiving a diagnostic level of 5 or 6 are eligible to receive a college ready designation.

Test takers' performance on the Essay Test results in one of five scenarios:

If test takers are routed to the Essay Test from the CRC Test:

- a. If performance on the Essay Test is at or above the college readiness classification score, then test takers have demonstrated college readiness on both the CRC Test and the Essay Test. These test takers receive an ISR indicating that they have demonstrated college readiness.
- b. If performance on the Essay Test is below the college readiness classification score, then test takers have not demonstrated college readiness on the Essay Test. These test takers receive an ISR indicating that they have not demonstrated college readiness; they may attempt to retake the Essay Test, or they may pursue placement in a corequisite course.

If test takers are routed to the Essay Test from the Diagnostic Test:

- c. If the Diagnostic Test yields a diagnostic level of 5 or 6 and performance on the Essay Test is at or above the college readiness classification score, then test takers have demonstrated college readiness on both the Diagnostic Test and the Essay Test. These test takers receive an ISR indicating that they have demonstrated college readiness.
- d. If the Diagnostic Test yields a diagnostic level of 5 or 6 but performance on the Essay Test is below the college readiness classification score, then test takers have not demonstrated college readiness on the Essay Test. These test takers receive an ISR indicating that they have not demonstrated college readiness; they may attempt to retake the Essay Test, or they may pursue placement in a corequisite course.
- e. If the Diagnostic Test yields a diagnostic level of 4, then test takers have not demonstrated college readiness on the Diagnostic Test. Irrespective of their performance on the Essay Test, these test takers receive an ISR indicating that they have not demonstrated college readiness.

Testing outcomes

Following testing, test takers who have completed all tests to which they are routed receive an individual score report (ISR) generally showing either a **college ready** classification or a **diagnostic** profile. Test takers bypassing the Diagnostic Test who score a 5 or below on the Essay Test receive

an ISR that includes only their CRC Test score and Essay Test holistic score and dimension statements.

(1) College ready classification

Test takers may receive a college ready classification in one of two ways:

- a. Test takers who score in the college ready range on the CRC Test and whose performance on the Essay Test is at or above the college readiness classification score are classified as college ready.
- b. Test takers who score in the not college ready range on the CRC Test but receive a diagnostic level of 5 or 6 on the Diagnostic Test and whose performance on the Essay Test is at or above the college readiness classification score are classified as college ready.

(2) Diagnostic profile

Test takers may receive a diagnostic profile in one of three ways:

- a. Test takers who score in the college ready range on the CRC Test but whose performance on the Essay Test is below the college readiness classification score receive a diagnostic profile as a part of their ISR. following diagnostic testing.
- b. Test takers who score in the not college ready range on the CRC Test and receive a diagnostic level of 4 or lower on the Diagnostic Test are given a diagnostic profile. (This is so even for test takers who receive a diagnostic level of 4 and are routed to the Essay Test; they are ineligible to receive a college ready designation.)
- c. Test takers who score in the not college ready range on the CRC Test and receive a diagnostic level of 5 or 6 on the Diagnostic Test but whose performance on the Essay Test is below the college readiness classification score receive a diagnostic profile as part of their ISR.

As noted in “Scores,” above, the diagnostic profile includes a diagnostic level and two proficiency descriptors along with proficiency statements accompanying the descriptors.

Test descriptions

The following section describes the various tests narratively. The information is summarized beginning on page 16 in [Table 1. Reading-focused CRC and Diagnostic Test content overview](#) and in [Table 2. Writing-focused CRC and Diagnostic Test content overview](#).

ELAR College Readiness Classification (CRC) Test

Purpose

The CRC Test is designed primarily to ascertain (in conjunction with the Essay Test) whether test takers are college ready or not college ready with respect to reading and writing.

Overall claim for the test

Students can demonstrate college readiness proficiency in reading and writing.

Delivery platforms

In its standard form, the CRC Test is delivered adaptively via computer. A range of accommodated versions is available for test takers with documented disabilities that may prevent them from taking the computer-delivered assessments; tests in these formats are fixed-form linear (i.e., not adaptive).

Item format

All CRC items are multiple-choice and represent a mixture of set-based and discrete items.

Stimulus content

Reading-related test stimuli include both authentic (previously published) stimuli and commissioned passages written for the test; literary passages as well as informational passages across a range of content areas (humanities, social science, science) and other topics (practical affairs, human relationships); and single and paired passages. These passages are mostly informative/explanatory in text type, with some narratives and occasional arguments; represent a range of text complexity centered on late secondary and early postsecondary bands; and range in length from 40 to 400 standard (six-character) words (with one passage in the range of 350–500 standard words).

Writing-related test stimuli are commissioned passages sampled from a range of content areas (humanities, social science, science) and other topics (practical affairs, human relationships). These passages are informative/explanatory in text type; represent a range of text complexities centered on late secondary and early postsecondary bands; and range in length from single sentences to prose passages of up to 350 standard words.

The range of text complexity test takers encounter in stimulus content is not distinctly constrained for. Instead, that range—which extends up to and includes college readiness and early postsecondary levels—is determined by associated item content.

Item content

Test items cover four main categories: two reading focused and two writing focused.

Reading focused

- Literary Text Analysis (explicit information, inferences, author’s craft, vocabulary)
- Informational Text Analysis and Synthesis (main ideas and supporting details, inferences [single-passage], author’s craft, vocabulary [interpreting words and phrases in context], synthesis [paired argumentative passages])

Writing focused

- Essay Revision and Editing (development, organization, effective language use, Standard English conventions)
- Sentence Revision, Editing, and Completion (conventions of grammar, conventions of usage, and conventions of punctuation)

A fuller articulation of item content can be found in [Table 1](#) and [Table 2](#) in [Appendix: Tables and figures](#), beginning on page 16.

Testing experience

A single testing experience consists of 30 items, half of which are reading focused and half of which are writing focused. Items are presented in a seamless experience, with no break or division between reading-focused and writing-focused CRC items. Reading-focused items appear first, beginning with the Literary Text Analysis set; writing-focused items follow, beginning with the Essay Revision and Editing set.

Reading-focused items

15 items

- 1 4-item Literary Text Analysis set
- 11 discrete Informational Text Analysis and Synthesis items
 - 2 Synthesis (paired argumentative passages) items
 - 9 items algorithmically chosen among all remaining Informational Text Analysis varieties

Writing-focused items

15 items

- 1 4-item Essay Revision and Editing set
- 11 discrete Sentence Revision, Editing, and Completion items
 - Algorithmically chosen among all Sentence Revision, Editing, and Completion varieties

ELAR Diagnostic Test

Purpose

The Diagnostic Test is designed primarily to identify test takers' academic strengths and weaknesses with respect to reading and writing.

Delivery platforms

In its standard form, the Diagnostic Test is delivered adaptively via computer. A range of accommodated versions is available for test takers with documented disabilities that may prevent them from taking the computer-delivered assessments; tests in these formats are fixed-form linear (i.e., not adaptive).

Item format

All Diagnostic items are multiple-choice and represent a mixture of discrete and set-based items.

Stimulus content

Reading-related test stimuli include both authentic (previously published) stimuli and commissioned passages written for the test; literary passages as well as informational passages across a range of content areas (humanities, social science, science) and other topics (practical affairs, human relationships); and single and paired passages. These passages are mostly informative/explanatory in text type, with some narratives and occasional arguments; represent a range of text complexity centered on late secondary and early postsecondary bands; and range in length from 40 to 400 standard (six-character) words. Some test takers, depending on performance, may also see non-passage-based items, such as ones involving graphical images.

Writing-related test stimuli are commissioned passages sampled from a range of content areas (humanities, social science, science) and other topics (practical affairs, human relationships). These passages are informative/explanatory in text type; represent a range of text complexity centered on late secondary and early postsecondary bands; and range in length from single sentences to prose passages of up to 350 standard words.

The range of text complexity test takers encounter in stimulus content is not distinctly constrained for. Instead, that range is determined by associated item content.

Item content

Paralleling the CRC Test, the Diagnostic Test comprises items in four content categories: two reading focused (which together constitute the Text Analysis and Synthesis strand) and two writing focused (which together constitute the Content Revision and Editing for Conventions strand). An asterisk (*) below denotes content on the Diagnostic Test not found on the CRC Test.

Text Analysis and Synthesis strand

- Literary Text Analysis (explicit information, inferences, author’s craft, vocabulary)
- Informational Text Analysis and Synthesis (main ideas and supporting details, inferences [single-passage], author’s craft, vocabulary [interpreting words and phrases in context, decoding and recognizing words*], synthesis [paired argumentative passages])

Content Revision and Editing for Conventions strand

- Essay Revision and Editing (development, organization, effective language use, Standard English conventions)
- Sentence Revision, Editing, and Completion (conventions of grammar, conventions of usage, conventions of punctuation, conventions of spelling and capitalization*, purpose and organization*, sentence combining*)

A fuller articulation of item content can be found in [Table 1](#) and [Table 2](#) in [Appendix: Tables and figures](#), beginning on page 16.

Note: The Text Analysis and Synthesis strand may not contain many Literary Text Analysis sets with difficulties corresponding to NRS EFL 2 (beginning basic) initially. As part of the postlaunch effort, the College Board will evaluate the feasibility of adding literary sets appropriate for these levels.

Testing experience

A single testing experience consists of 48 items, covering both reading and writing, across two strands. Items are presented in a seamless experience, with no break or division between reading-focused and writing-focused diagnostic items. Reading-focused (or Text Analysis and Synthesis) items appear first, beginning with the Literary Text Analysis sets; writing-focused items (or Content Revision and Editing for Conventions) follow, beginning with the Essay Revision and Editing sets.

Text Analysis and Synthesis items

24 items

- 3 4-item Literary Text Analysis sets
- 12 discrete Informational Text Analysis and Synthesis items
 - 2 Synthesis (paired argumentative passages) items
 - 10 items algorithmically chosen among all remaining Informational Text Analysis varieties

Content Revision and Editing for Conventions items

24 items

- 3 4-item Essay Revision and Editing sets
- 12 discrete Sentence Revision, Editing, and Completion items
 - Algorithmically chosen among all Sentence Revision, Editing, and Completion varieties

Essay

Note: The Essay Test remains unchanged from TSIA1.

Purpose

The Essay Test is designed primarily to ascertain (in conjunction with the CRC Test and possibly the Diagnostic Test) whether test takers are college ready or not college ready with respect to writing.

Overall claim for the test

Students can demonstrate college readiness proficiency in writing.

Delivery platforms

In its standard form, the Essay Test is delivered via and responses are scored by computer. A range of accommodations is available for test takers with documented disabilities that may prevent them from taking the computer-delivered assessments.

Task format

The Essay Test consists of a single constructed-response prompt.

Stimulus content

The Essay Test includes a brief text (*passage*) for test takers to read and consider as they develop their written response to the question (*assignment*). This passage is not a reading passage per se: test takers are not assessed on their comprehension of this passage, nor do they need to discuss it in their response. Rather, it serves primarily as “food for thought” and to contextualize the assignment (see below).

Assignment

The Essay Test prompt includes an assignment, which is the question that test takers’ response is intended to address (e.g., “Are we free to make our own decisions or are we limited in the choices we can make?”).

Evaluation criteria

Test taker responses receive a single holistic score on a scale from 1 to 8. Responses are evaluated on six characteristics: (1) purpose and focus, (2) organization and structure, (3) development and support, (4) sentence variety and style, (5) mechanical conventions, and (6) critical thinking. Feedback is provided on the six dimensions on which responses are evaluated.

Appendix: Tables and figures

Table 1. Reading-focused CRC and Diagnostic Test content overview

Content category	Content	Description
Literary Text Analysis		The student will identify and analyze ideas in and elements of literary text.
	Explicit information	The student will identify ideas explicitly stated and clearly indicated in literary text.
	Inferences	The student will draw reasonable inferences from literary text.
	Author's craft	The student will analyze an author's word choice rhetorically, analyze text structure, purpose, and audience, and analyze point of view and perspective in literary text
	Vocabulary	The student will determine the meaning of words and phrases in context in literary text.
Informational Text Analysis and Synthesis		The student will identify and analyze information and ideas in and elements of informational text.
	Main ideas and supporting details	The student will identify main ideas of and comprehend explicitly stated and clearly indicated information and ideas in informational text.
	Inferences (single-passage)	The student will draw reasonable inferences from informational text.
	Author's craft	The student will analyze word choice rhetorically, analyze text structure, purpose, and audience, and analyze point of view and perspective in informational text.
	Vocabulary	The student will determine the meaning of words and phrases in context in informational text and (Diagnostic only) apply decoding skills.
	Synthesis	The student will draw reasonable connections between two related argumentative texts, including determining rhetorical relationships, analyzing commonalities, and analyzing claims and counterclaims.

Table 2. Writing-focused CRC and Diagnostic Test content overview

Content category	Content	Description
Essay Revision and Editing		The student will revise and edit prose text as needed to improve development, organization, and rhetorical word choice as well as ensure conformity to the conventions of standard written English grammar, usage, and punctuation.
	Development	The student will revise as necessary to improve the development of text.
	Organization	The student will revise as necessary to improve the organization of text.
	Effective language use	The student will revise as necessary to improve the rhetorical use of language.
	Standard English conventions	The student will edit text as necessary to ensure conformity to the conventions of standard written English grammar, usage, and punctuation.
Sentence Revision, Editing, and Completion		The student will edit and complete sentences as necessary to ensure conformity to the conventions of standard written English grammar, usage, punctuation, and (Diagnostic only) spelling and capitalization as well as make effective decisions regarding purpose and organization (Diagnostic only) and sentence combining (Diagnostic only).
	Conventions of grammar	The student will edit and complete sentences as necessary to ensure conformity to the conventions of standard English grammar.
	Conventions of usage	The student will edit and complete sentences as necessary to ensure conformity to the conventions of standard written English usage.
	Conventions of punctuation	The student will edit and complete sentences as needed to ensure conformity to the conventions of standard written English punctuation.
	Conventions of spelling and capitalization (Diagnostic only)	The student will edit and complete sentences as needed to ensure conformity to the conventions of standard written English spelling and capitalization.

Content category	Content	Description
	Purpose and organization (Diagnostic only)	The student will make effective decisions regarding the appropriateness of written material for a given purpose and/or audience and the organization of written material.
	Sentence combining (Diagnostic only)	The student will combine two sentences into a more effective single sentence.

Table 3. TSIA1 to TSIA2 crosswalk

Note: This table illustrates the content relationship between the two testing suites. It further shows that while TSIA2’s content organization and item pools have been updated, all content in TSIA1 continues to be assessed in TSIA2.

Elements Tested in TSIA1	Corresponding Elements in TSIA2
<i>Reading (Placement, DE Diagnostic)</i>	<i>CRC and Diagnostic (reading-focused items)</i>
Literary Text Analysis	Literary Text Analysis
Main ideas and supporting details / Main ideas	Informational Text Analysis and Synthesis (main ideas and supporting details)
Main ideas and supporting details / Supporting details	Informational Text Analysis and Synthesis (main ideas and supporting details)
Author’s use of language / Vocabulary	Informational Text Analysis and Synthesis (vocabulary)
Author’s use of language / Non-vocabulary	Informational Text Analysis and Synthesis (author’s craft)
Inferences in a text or texts / Paired-passage inferences	Informational Text Analysis and Synthesis (synthesis)
Inferences in a text or texts / Single passage	Informational Text Analysis and Synthesis (Inferences [single-passage])
<i>ABE</i>	<i>Diagnostic (reading-focused items)</i>
Decode and recognize words	Informational Text Analysis and Synthesis (vocabulary)
Comprehension	Informational Text Analysis and Synthesis (varies)
<i>Writing (Placement, DE Diagnostic)</i>	<i>CRC and Diagnostic (writing-focused items)</i>
Essay revision	Essay Revision and Editing
Sentence structure / sentence correction	Sentence Revision, Editing, and Completion (conventions of grammar)
Sentence structure / construction shift	Sentence Revision, Editing, and Completion (conventions of grammar)
Agreement / sentence correction	Sentence Revision, Editing, and Completion (conventions of grammar)
Agreement / construction shift	Sentence Revision, Editing, and Completion (conventions of grammar)
Sentence logic / spelling	Sentence Revision, Editing, and Completion (conventions of usage, conventions of spelling and capitalization)
Sentence logic / diction/modification	Sentence Revision, Editing, and Completion (conventions of grammar)
Sentence logic / sentence correction	Sentence Revision, Editing, and Completion (conventions of grammar)
Sentence logic / construction shift	Sentence Revision, Editing, and Completion (conventions of grammar)
<i>ABE</i>	<i>Diagnostic (writing-focused items)</i>
Grammar and structure	Sentence Revision, Editing, and Completion (conventions of grammar, conventions of usage, conventions of punctuation, conventions of spelling and capitalization)
Organization and composition	Sentence Revision, Editing, and Completion (purpose and organization, sentence combining)

