

# Writing Assessment and Evaluation Rubrics

Name ..... Class ..... Date .....

## Above-average Writing Model

### Writing Process in Action: Persuasive Writing (Unit 6, pages 306–309)

**Assignment:** Write a three- to five-page persuasive essay supporting the position that a particular cultural ingredient is of paramount importance in making people who they are.

#### Family Ties

I believe that one of the factors that most influences all of our characters is our relationship to the family unit. Whether we believe that the individual is more important than the family as a whole or whether we believe that the family's needs are more important than any one individual's, the attitude towards family affects each of us in profound ways. Where we live, who we live with, and how our personalities develop are to a large part determined by how we see ourselves in relation to our families. And as a Vietnamese American now living in the United States, I believe that how we see ourselves in relation to our families is to a large part determined by our cultural background.

*Has clear thesis*

It seems to me that, in general, Americans often put their individual freedom before their obligation to a family group. The fact that the United States has the highest divorce rate in the Western world supports my claim. If a husband or wife isn't personally happy in a marriage, he or she will often opt to break up the family unit in order to pursue his or her individual goals. If adult children need to move to another state to advance in their careers, they are almost always willing to leave behind their parents and other family members to do so. Instead of taking the time and energy to take care of elderly parents, grandparents, aunts, or uncles, Americans will often encourage their older relatives to move to an institution and pay for care. All of this is in keeping with many other American values—the desire for personal freedom, economic advancement, and new possessions and experiences.

*Uses fact to support thesis*

*Uses parallel structure to emphasize point*

This attitude spreads from the culture at large and from the older generation to the younger one. Most of my second- and third-generation and can't-remember-who-came-here-when friends don't feel a strong obligation to their families. While American parents are busy pursuing their dreams and getting ahead, their children are expected to do so too. My friend Tom, a third-generation American, was deserted by his father and raised by his mother who had little time to spend with him. She was busy working as well as going to school to fulfill her dream of getting a medical degree. Tom only saw his grandparents about once a year. He has never felt part of a family, so he feels no obligation to one. "I'm glad I don't owe a whole bunch of people something just because of a blood bond. If someone gets my loyalty, it is because they deserve it." Tom plans to go to the best college he gets into no matter how far away it is from his mother, and once he leaves home for college he doesn't plan on ever living with his mother again. "I love her and everything, but I want to be on my own. Sometimes she feels like she can tell me what to do, and I can't stand that." Obviously, Tom has confidence in his ability to be on his own. He's independent and adventuresome, but some people might call him disrespectful and rash. These parts of his personality are all related to his views on family.

*Supports thesis with real-world examples and quotations*

*Argument is based on sound inductive reasoning.*

Many of my other American friends share Tom's attitudes, even if both of their parents are together. When these friends talk about where they'll go to college and

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## Above-average Writing Model (continued)

where they'll live after college, most of them say that being near their parents is not a consideration (although being not near them sometimes is). My friends who work spend their money on CDs and clothes; they would never think of giving it to other family members. American teenagers often consider their friends more important than their family. For instance, when my American friend Jana was trying to decide whether or not to quit the track team last year, she talked to me about it for days. She only told her family about it after her decision had been made. Her family's opinion is just not that important to her. She makes independent decisions based on her own set of criteria. As with Tom, the typical American family relationships seem to help people develop the qualities of independence and confidence but also some degree of selfishness.

*Anecdote supports argument.*

However, some other cultures place much more emphasis on the family unit and much less emphasis on the individual. For example, in my Vietnamese culture, every person has a strong obligation to his or her family as a whole. This attitude extends out from the nuclear family and includes a larger group of relatives—aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents, and grandchildren are all responsible for one another. This responsibility plays out in many ways, affecting the lives of all who live within the family. For example, if anyone needs financial support, medical help, or a place to stay, family members are obliged to provide it if at all possible. This means that although I can't count on privacy or free time or getting lots of new things for myself, I can count on having help if I ever need it. In this sense, my relationship to my family decreases my sense of individualism and increases my sense of security. Because of this, I think I feel less restless than some of my friends.

*Transition helps signal the second part of the argument.*

In Vietnamese culture, children, especially, are expected to put their family's needs at least on par with, if not before, their own. Such is the case in my family. My great-aunt lives with us, and when she needs to go to the doctor I always take her, even if I already had plans with my friends. My sister and I turn over almost all of our summer job money to my mother who uses it to buy groceries and to save for our college.

Some of my American friends feel sorry for me and think my parents are strict and unfair, but they shouldn't. Unlike my friend Tom, I have had the good fortune to know that there's a group of people made up of all generations to whom I belong. My closeness to my family means that I'm not as adventuresome as my friends, so I sometimes say no when they want to go on a road trip to Houston at the last minute. It also means that I'm not as independent as my friends, so I'm going to try to go to a college that will let me live at home for the first year. But I believe that my family relationships have helped make me into a responsible, secure, and loving person. I also believe that everyone else's relationship to their family has affected them in some very profound ways, too.

*Connects earlier examples to the rest of the essay*

*Concludes by summarizing ways in which the cultural ingredients affect a person*

**Summary:** *This essay makes a persuasive case for the importance of one's relationship to one's family in determining personal qualities. The argument is well organized and well supported by specific, sometimes personal, examples.*

*This essay would probably receive a 4 if evaluated by the holistic scoring method. It might receive a 97 if evaluated according to the analytic scoring method—34 points for Focus/Organization, 33 points for Elaboration/Style/Support, and 30 points for Grammar, Usage, and Mechanics.*