



# **English II**

## **Persuasive Scoring Guide**

**March 2017**

# English II

## Persuasive Prompt

Read the following quotation.

Think of all the beauty that's still left in and  
around you and be happy.

—*from* The Diary of Anne Frank  
*by* Anne Frank

Even in difficult circumstances, some people focus on the positive aspects of life. Think carefully about this statement.

Write an essay stating your opinion on whether a person can choose to be happy.

Be sure to —

- state your position clearly
- use appropriate organization
- provide specific support for your argument
- choose your words carefully
- edit your writing for grammar, mechanics, and spelling

## **Score Point 1**

**The essay represents a very limited writing performance.**

### Organization/Progression

- ❑ The organizing structure of the essay is inappropriate to the purpose or the specific demands of the prompt. The writer uses organizational strategies that are only marginally suited to the persuasive task, or they are inappropriate or not evident at all. The absence of a functional organizational structure causes the essay to lack clarity and direction.
- ❑ Most ideas are generally related to the issue specified in the prompt, but the writer's position is missing, unclear, or illogical. The writer may fail to maintain focus on the issue, may include extraneous information, or may shift abruptly from idea to idea, weakening the coherence of the essay.
- ❑ The writer's progression of ideas is weak. Repetition or wordiness sometimes causes serious disruptions in the flow of the essay. At other times the lack of transitions and sentence-to-sentence connections causes the writer to present ideas in a random or illogical way, making one or more parts of the essay unclear or difficult to follow.

### Development of Ideas

- ❑ The development of ideas is weak. The argument is ineffective and unconvincing because the reasons and evidence the writer uses to support the position are inappropriate, vague, or insufficient.
- ❑ The essay is insubstantial because the writer's response to the prompt is vague or confused. In some cases, the essay as a whole is only weakly linked to the prompt. In other cases, the writer develops the essay in a manner that demonstrates a lack of understanding of the persuasive writing task.

### Use of Language/Conventions

- ❑ The writer's word choice may be vague or limited. It reflects little or no awareness of the persuasive purpose and does not establish a tone appropriate to the task. Word choice may impede the quality and clarity of the essay.
- ❑ Sentences are simplistic, awkward, or uncontrolled, significantly limiting the effectiveness of the essay.
- ❑ The writer has little or no command of sentence boundaries and spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and usage conventions. Serious and persistent errors create disruptions in the fluency of the writing and sometimes interfere with meaning.

Happiness is a state of well-being and contentment, a pleasure and satisfaction. Happiness is not something you can choose to be, it's something you can be made to be. Being happy is very important, happiness is something everyone has felt at one moment in life, people say "Money can't buy happiness" I say go tell that to a homeless man. Happiness is the number one positive emotion a person can have when you are happy you don't need anything. Yes happiness can cause boastfulness and make you to lose your friends. People are happy when they choose to be happiness is not, something you can force someone to be happiness is something you can make someone to be.

**Score Point 1**

The writer of this composition offers the position that happiness "is not something you can choose to be it's something you can be made to be." There is no attempt to support this position. The writer makes several statements regarding happiness: "happiness is something everyone has felt at one moment in life," "Happiness is the number one positive emotion," "happiness can cause boastfulness." The writer shifts abruptly from idea to idea, and the essay does not progress in a logical manner. The writer reiterates the position at the end of the essay, but this does not help develop the ideas of the position statement. This essay represents a very limited writing performance because it lacks clarity and direction.

A person can choose to be happy  
People can all was be happy because it's  
in the brain. My opinion is that everyone  
should choose to be happy. If every one is  
happy there will be no sad ness.  
It would be a good thing if people  
could choose to be happy. Choose to be happy  
or not that is not real why not be sad.  
Sad can make you feel real and happy  
wen you are sad know one is a robot  
so why choose just let it happen that  
is my real opinion.  
People should all was let there brain  
choose to be happy or sad.

**Score Point 1**

In this composition, the writer takes the position that “A person can choose to be happy”; however, the supporting ideas are weakly developed, and the sentence-to-sentence connections cause disruptions in the flow of the essay. The student begins the second paragraph with a topic sentence stating that people choosing to be happy is a good thing. The student goes on to write, “Choosing to be happy or not is not real. Why not be sad?” The flow from each of these sentences is hindered because there are no explicit or implicit connections among these ideas, making this part of the essay unclear and difficult to follow. In addition, the progression of ideas is not always logical. For example, the idea that sadness “can make you feel real and happy” does not contribute to the argument because it makes no sense within the context of the essay. Awkward sentences and inappropriate word choice further impede the clarity of the essay. All these factors contribute to an essay that represents a very limited writing performance.

A person can choose to be happy anyone can choose to be happy it's just the way they are like being the richest guy or girl with money, being a guy who billud a million dollar car, being a guy who owns a manchin, having the world best job, also having severants for you telling them what to do. for example me I would choose to be happy with animals because I love them that what I would choose and you can choose to be happy with whatever you like, love, and live you can be happy with that but if you wait and want something that you can't have your going to suffer the consecutive so I am going to tell you here don't wait you have a world out there don't waste time just go and explore it with that one thing that makes you happy.

**Score Point 1**

The writer of this composition states that “A person can choose to be happy. Anyone can choose to be happy.” Although the student provides several examples explaining how a person can be happy, they are too brief and lack the detail needed to support the position statement. In addition, the writer has little control of sentence boundaries, causing disruptions to the fluency of the writing and impeding the clarity of the essay. Because the writer ineffectively develops the many ideas provided and exhibits a lack of control of sentence boundaries, this essay represents a very limited writing performance.

A person can choose to be happy. If the person is happy he/she will have positive things in his/hers life. If they decide to be mad, sad the the bad or negative things will come to you. People should always stay happy and positive in everything but it's still if the person want's to. Think of all the beauty that's still left in and around you an be happy. that means never be sad, or be mad because negative things will come to you. There's some people that they just always mad and they don't change some are emotional, but the people that are always happy and have a great, big smile in there face even though they are having the worst day they will keep it positive with a smile, so yes some people choose to be be happy.

**Score Point 1**

The writer of this composition agrees that a person can choose to be happy but does not make an effective argument to support this idea. The writer explains that a happy person will have “positive things in his/hers life,” but if that person is sad “negative things will come to you.” However, the writer does not tie this idea to the choice to be happy. The writer then goes on to describe people who are “always mad” or “always happy,” but the ideas are vague and do not contribute in a logical or clear way to the essay. Overall, this composition represents a very limited writing performance.

## **Score Point 2**

**The essay represents a basic writing performance.**

### Organization/Progression

- ❑ The organizing structure of the essay is evident but may not always be appropriate to the purpose or the specific demands of the prompt. The essay is not always clear because the writer uses organizational strategies that are only somewhat suited to the persuasive task.
- ❑ Most ideas are generally related to the issue specified in the prompt, but the writer's position is weak or somewhat unclear. The lack of a clear, effective position or the writer's inclusion of irrelevant information interferes with the focus and coherence of the essay.
- ❑ The writer's progression of ideas is not always logical and controlled. Sometimes repetition or wordiness causes minor disruptions in the flow of the essay. At other times transitions and sentence-to-sentence connections are too perfunctory or weak to support the flow of the essay or show the relationships among ideas.

### Development of Ideas

- ❑ The development of ideas is minimal. The argument is superficial and largely unconvincing because the reasons and evidence the writer uses to support the position are not always appropriate or are too briefly or partially presented.
- ❑ The essay reflects little or no thoughtfulness. The writer's response to the prompt is sometimes formulaic. The writer develops the essay in a manner that demonstrates only a limited understanding of the persuasive writing task.

### Use of Language/Conventions

- ❑ The writer's word choice may be general or imprecise. It reflects a basic awareness of the persuasive purpose but does little to establish a tone appropriate to the task. Word choice may not contribute to the quality and clarity of the essay.
- ❑ Sentences are awkward or only somewhat controlled, weakening the effectiveness of the essay.
- ❑ The writer demonstrates a partial command of sentence boundaries and spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and usage conventions. Some distracting errors may be evident, at times creating minor disruptions in the fluency or meaning of the writing.

Anybody can choose to be happy.  
There isn't one person in this world  
who can force you not to be happy.

Each and everyone of us have the  
right to be happy there is only one person  
who can change your mood and if you  
want to be happy, it's you. People  
can tell you the rudest remarks,  
but you are the one who has  
the choice to not be happy  
anymore. Being happy to me is being  
with your loved ones there not  
always going to give you  
everything, but they will always  
be there to cheer you up no  
matter what the situation is.

I think it depends on the person.  
It depends on who they  
want to be and how their  
mood is affecting them.

**Score Point 2**

In this essay, the writer presents an evolving position that “Anyone can choose to be happy” and that “it depends on the person.” The writer develops this position by explaining how “you are the one who has the choice to not be happy anymore” when others make rude remarks. However, this example is too briefly presented to effectively support the argument. In addition, the writer’s word choice is too general to get a specific idea of what he is talking about. For example, the student writes that your loved ones “will always be there to cheer you up no matter what the situation is.” The student does not go on to relate how this ties back to his position. Overall, the minimal development and general word choice in this essay represent a basic writing performance.

Can a person choose their happiness?  
Yes they can, because its up to  
you on how to live your day  
and life. You are the only one  
who has control over your  
happiness. And besides, life is so  
short to be waisted mad or  
sad all the time.

In life there will allways be  
people who will try to ruin  
your day just because they dont  
have anything better to do, but  
it will be your decision if you  
let them achieve their goal or  
not.

There are many ways to find  
happiness, for example being  
with family and friends could  
be one of the biggest causes  
of happiness, just being with  
your loved ones.

In every day there is allways  
something beautiful to discover  
and be happy for, you just need to  
find it. Smile every day because  
youll never know when will be the last.

**Score Point 2**

In this response, the writer offers the position that a person can choose happiness “because its up to you on how to live your day and life. You are the only one who has control over your happiness.” The writer asserts that people will try to “ruin your day . . . but it will be your decision if you let them.” In the third paragraph, the student briefly presents an example of how to find happiness through family, friends, and loved ones. These ideas are general and reflect little thoughtfulness. Although the writer provides an appropriate organizational structure, the overall development is minimal and the argument is superficial. This essay represents a basic writing performance.

Have you ever put on a smile and say you're happy when in a reality you're not? One can't simply choose to be happy. If a person isn't happy then he/she can't easily say "I'm happy." For example a person is depressed, they can't and probably won't say "I'm happy" because they can't choose to be happy. Maybe a person has a lot going on at home but they fake a smile, that doesn't mean they chose to be happy. It means they want every body else to think that they are happy, or wants everyone else to be happy. Maybe they also don't wanna talk about it so they put on a smile so that they won't have to. There are a lot of reasons why people can't choose to be happy.

**Score Point 2**

The writer of this essay takes the position that a person “can’t simply choose to be happy.” The hypothetical example of a person who cannot choose to be happy because they are depressed due to “a lot going on at home” is only minimally developed. Instead of linking this idea more clearly to the position, the student provides brief speculations as to why a person might choose to mask feelings of sadness. In addition, the writer’s word choice is too general and does little to establish an appropriate persuasive tone. For these reasons, this response represents a basic writing performance.

A person can choose to be happy because you can change from being depressed to happy by believing and it all depends on your attitude.

First of all, when you're all sad and depressed, you change that with just one smile! For example, scientists state if you smile then your brain starts to change and then \*bam\* you're actually happy and not at all gloomy.

Furthermore, your attitude can affect if you're happy or not. When you choose not to be all rude and instead being helpful and being respectful. For example, when you choose not to argue with someone or when you keep telling yourself positive thoughts and not negative ones, and when you're not being stressful and instead you're carefree, relax, and smiling.

In conclusion, you can choose to be happy and you set your mind with full of positiveness and not with any negative.

**Score Point 2**

In the last paragraph of this essay, the writer shares the position that you can choose to be happy when you focus on the positive. Although the writer provides an appropriate organizational structure, the examples contained within the paragraphs are superficially developed and minimal. In the first body paragraph, for example, the writer notes that “scientists state that if you smile then your brain starts to change and then \*bam\* you're actually happy and not at all gloomy.” This idea is too partial because it is dropped and not developed with a more specific example. This essay represents a basic writing performance.

## **Score Point 3**

**The essay represents a satisfactory writing performance.**

### Organization/Progression

- ❑ The organizing structure of the essay is, for the most part, appropriate to the purpose and responsive to the specific demands of the prompt. The essay is clear because the writer uses organizational strategies that are adequately suited to the persuasive task.
- ❑ The writer establishes a clear position. Most ideas are related to the position and are focused on the issue specified in the prompt. The essay is coherent, though it may not always be unified due to minor lapses in focus.
- ❑ The writer’s progression of ideas is generally logical and controlled. For the most part, transitions are meaningful, and sentence-to-sentence connections are sufficient to support the flow of the essay and show the relationships among ideas.

### Development of Ideas

- ❑ The development of ideas is sufficient. The argument is largely convincing because the reasons and evidence the writer uses to support the position are specific and appropriate.
- ❑ The essay reflects some thoughtfulness. The writer’s response to the prompt is original rather than formulaic. The writer develops the essay in a manner that demonstrates a good understanding of the persuasive writing task.

### Use of Language/Conventions

- ❑ The writer’s word choice is, for the most part, clear and specific. It reflects an awareness of the persuasive purpose and establishes a tone appropriate to the task. Word choice usually contributes to the quality and clarity of the essay.
- ❑ Sentences are reasonably varied and adequately controlled, contributing for the most part to the effectiveness of the essay.
- ❑ The writer demonstrates an adequate command of sentence boundaries and spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and usage conventions. Although some errors may be evident, they create few (if any) disruptions in the fluency of the writing, and they do not affect the clarity of the essay.

If you are in a difficult circumstance would you choose to be happy? If a loved one passed away would you choose to be happy? I can honestly say I don't think we pick how we feel. I would never be happy in a difficult situation, and why is this you ask well because there are some things that can't be controlled by certain types of people. For me my feelings have to be let out I can't pretend to be happy all the time, because that is not who I am.

I can't speak for other people, the reason for me saying this is because some people can choose how they want to feel willingly. If you are one of those types of people then you can choose to be happy all the time. I also think it is unhealthy to choose to be happy all the time, the reason I say this is because if you are going through a tough circumstance you are naturally not going to be happy. It is bad to keep mixed emotions balled up inside you, that can lead to stress and that can affect you physically it can lead to chances of stroke.

I don't think one should choose the way they feel. I think you should let your emotions flow naturally. If you may be mad, if your happy then be happy. I don't think you can choose to be happy. I mean really, how do you think the world would be without emotion?

**Score Point 3**

In the opinion of the writer of this essay, people should not choose “the way they feel,” but should instead let “emotions flow naturally.” To support this argument, the student writes candidly about how “it is unhealthy to choose to be happy all the time” because people are “not naturally going to be happy” during “a tough circumstance.” The writer adds that keeping one’s real emotions “balled up inside” can “lead to stress” and this can increase the “chances of stroke.” These ideas are developed with enough specificity that the reader can understand the writer’s flow of thought. The student maintains a persuasive tone throughout the essay by including rhetorical questions (“... would you choose to be happy?”), concessions (“I can’t speak for other people . . .”), and a call to action in the conclusion (“If your mad be mad, if your happy then be happy.”). The writer maintains focus on the stated position, and the sentence-to-sentence connections are sufficient to show the relationships among ideas. In addition, the writer has a few lapses in sentence boundaries. These lapses are minor and do not affect the clarity of the essay. Therefore, the overall progress of the response is logical and coherent, making this a satisfactory writing performance.

Happiness is one of nature's finest qualities. "Think of all the beauty that's still left in and around you and be happy." Anne Frank is explaining that no matter what type of situation someone is in, they always have the right to choose their happiness.

Death is a hard subject to talk about with most people because the sadness of losing a loved one is such a powerful pain. Often people go into depression when a loved one is passed because the happy moments are usually forgotten at that very moment. But once memories start flowing through one's head, they're greatly remembered that they're in a better place.

Getting that heart-breaking phone call that your significant other no longer wants to be with you is another hard obstacle to overcome. There are many different emotions someone could feel after a moment like such. One of those emotions can be to choose to be happy, because now another opportunity for someone better has been offered.

Happiness is known for the best medicine in life. At the end of the day happiness is always a choice. There's so much to life to not be happy, grieving will get you nowhere. Life goes by too fast to take happiness for granted.

**Score Point 3**

The writer's position in this response is that "no matter what type of situation someone is in they always have the right to choose their happiness." The writer then organizes the paper by discussing two different times a person might not be happy. In the first example, "the sadness of losing a loved one" is eventually replaced by remembering "they are in a better place." In the second example, the writer argues that out of the many emotions one might feel from a breakup, "One of those emotions can be to choose to be happy, because now another opportunity for someone better has been offered." The writer supports the idea of choosing happiness with specific and appropriate examples that reflect some thoughtfulness. Overall, this essay represents a satisfactory writing performance.

Life is ten percent what happens to you and ninety percent how you respond to it. Happiness is in fact a choice.

When things aren't going your way, it's hard to keep positive and stay happy, but chances are someone, somewhere has it worse off than you. For example, my aunt recently who recently won her battle with ovarian cancer remained positive and upbeat the entire time. She could have moped around and felt sorry for herself, but she didn't. When my parents and I visited her she managed to go out to dinner even though she'd been recently treated with chemotherapy. She stayed strong and didn't let her issues affect her happiness.

There is always something good in your life for you to be happy or grateful for. On a lighter note, a character named Larry on the TV show "Parks and Rec" has it rough but nothing can kill his happiness. He is taunted and made fun of constantly by his co-workers who treat him with zero respect. He may have a hard life at work but he lives in a beautiful home with a model trophy wife and lovely kids. I think this keeps him going through his office adversity.

The only way someone wouldn't be able to choose to be happy is if they're clinically depressed but in this day and age there's medicine for that. You have the choice to focus on the positive aspects of life.

### Score Point 3

The writer of this essay believes that "Life is ten percent what happens to you and ninety percent how you respond to it" and concludes the introduction with a position statement: "Happiness is, in fact, a choice." To support this position, the writer presents two examples. The first example is a personal anecdote about the writer's aunt who is battling cancer. According to the student, the aunt "stayed strong and didn't let her issues affect her happiness." The second example is about the character Larry from the television show *Parks and Recreation*. This example is not as persuasive as the personal anecdote because the writer counterbalances Larry's hardships at work with his "beautiful home . . . model trophy wife and lovely kids." By stating this, the writer does not necessarily tie this paragraph into the position statement. In addition, both paragraphs are related to the thesis, but the essay as a whole is not unified because the two disparate examples are not specifically related to each other. Therefore, this response represents a satisfactory writing performance.

During the Holocaust, Anne Frank wrote in her diary, "Think of all the beauty that's still left in and around you and be happy." Most people during this time would probably be anything but happy, but not Anne. She chose to be happy by focusing on the good things that were around her. This shows that a person can choose to be happy even if they are facing difficult circumstances by focusing on the good things instead of the bad.

When people are sad they focus on the bad things that are going on in their life. No matter how bad things seem to be, if they focus on the good things like their health, family, and friends people can choose to be happy. Thinking of the good memories that they had with the people that they love can put a smile on their face on a bad day.

Another way to choose to be happy is by listening to happy, up beat music. Listening to slow songs will allow you to think about the things that bother you. Listening to happy music can help you forget about being sad. Throwing yourself a little party in your room, is you choosing to be happy.

Another way for people to choose to be happy is by forgiving people who have hurt you. Once you forgive someone you two can start laughing and talking again. If you hold a grudge, you are causing yourself to be sad or mad.

Being happy is a choice. Focusing on the good things, listening to music that's up beat, and forgiving someone are ways in which you choose to be happy.

### Score Point 3

The writer of this response begins by suggesting Anne Frank was an example of someone who "chose to be happy by focusing on the good things that were around her." According to the writer, "a person can choose to be happy even if they are facing difficult circumstances by focusing on the good things instead of the bad." By using a cause-and-effect organizational strategy, the writer demonstrates how people can choose happiness instead of sadness. Although the examples the writer provides are appropriate (focusing on the good things in life, listening to upbeat music, and forgiving a grudge), these details lack the specificity and depth needed to be wholly effective. However, the progression of ideas is generally logical and controlled, and the sentence-to-sentence connections support the flow of this satisfactory writing performance.

## **Score Point 4**

**The essay represents an accomplished writing performance.**

### Organization/Progression

- ❑ The organizing structure of the essay is clearly appropriate to the purpose and responsive to the specific demands of the prompt. The essay is skillfully crafted because the writer uses organizational strategies that are particularly well suited to the persuasive task.
- ❑ The writer establishes a clear position. All ideas are strongly related to the position and are focused on the issue specified in the prompt. By sustaining this focus, the writer is able to create an essay that is unified and coherent.
- ❑ The writer's progression of ideas is logical and well controlled. Meaningful transitions and strong sentence-to-sentence connections enhance the flow of the essay by clearly showing the relationships among ideas, making the writer's train of thought easy to follow.

### Development of Ideas

- ❑ The development of ideas is highly effective. The argument is forceful and convincing because the reasons and evidence the writer uses to support the position are specific and well chosen.
- ❑ The essay is thoughtful and engaging. The writer may choose to recognize the complexities of the issue, consider opposing or alternate points of view, use his/her unique experiences or view of the world as a basis for writing, or connect ideas in interesting ways. The writer develops the essay in a manner that demonstrates a thorough understanding of the persuasive writing task.

### Use of Language/Conventions

- ❑ The writer's word choice is purposeful and precise. It reflects a keen awareness of the persuasive purpose and maintains a tone appropriate to the task. Word choice strongly contributes to the quality and clarity of the essay.
- ❑ Sentences are purposeful, varied, and well controlled, enhancing the effectiveness of the essay.
- ❑ The writer demonstrates a consistent command of sentence boundaries and spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and usage conventions. Although minor errors may be evident, they do not detract from the fluency of the writing or the clarity of the essay. The overall strength of the conventions contributes to the effectiveness of the essay.

When it comes to emotions, there are two of every kind. The first being a natural reaction, the second being artificial. A true emotion is a natural reaction we have to something that triggers our minds into a certain state of feeling or sentiment. While a fictitious one is a feeling we have naturally felt before but will mimic in order to fool ourselves or the people around us. So, I do not believe one has a choice when it comes to being happy.

We hear it everywhere, at school, at home, and in religious studies, "happiness is a choice." To me, I feel like this is a lie, and is the same thing as saying love is a choice. I am not speaking about friendly love. I am talking about romantic love. No matter how hard we try, it is impossible to choose to love someone, meaning you can't just point at a strange man, confess your undying love and affection for him, this would be fallacious and irrational. You must fall in love, which is something we naturally do, and the same goes for happiness as well as any other emotion. We must fall into happiness to truly feel it, and the only way to do so is to be in an environment that stimulates said emotion.

An emotion being faked can be seen everywhere, in movies, television shows, friends (sadly), as well as family. I firmly believe that happiness is confused with having a positive outlook, while we may be internally hurting it is easy to convince ourselves that everything will be okay, which feels natural, but more often than not it is something we force ourselves into in order to alleviate some of the stress a natural emotion may be inflicting upon us.

While Anne Frank is someone who truly left a mark on history, I believe she was confusing having positivity with happiness, and stand firm on my position that happiness must be felt both on the outside and inside. It cannot be chosen, but must directly correspond to your body's natural reaction to its environment.

#### Score Point 4

The writer of this essay introduces a complex position in the first paragraph. According to the writer, there are "natural" and "artificial" emotions, and although people may fool themselves into believing they are happy, their natural emotions do not give them "a choice when it comes to being happy." In the first body paragraph, the writer effectively develops the first idea of natural emotion with a compare-contrast organizational structure, comparing the notion of choosing to be happy with choosing to fall in love, and the student logically concludes that "We must fall into happiness to truly feel it" just as we fall in love. Sustaining the focus on the position statement into the third paragraph, the writer extends the argument to a discussion of artificial or "fake" emotions. Citing movies, television, friends, and family as exemplars, the writer explains how happiness is often confused with a positive outlook. By sustaining this strong focus throughout the composition, the writer has created a unified essay. The student's purposeful and precise command of language and the essay's logical progression of well-developed ideas indicate an accomplished writing performance.

“An attitude of gratitude is the key to a happy life.” This is a common saying around my house by my mother. Some people might argue that our happiness stems from our circumstances, but I believe that happiness is a choice based on your attitude, and your level of gratitude.

Is the glass half empty, or half full? We've grown up surrounded by motivational tag lines such as this. I always ignored them and chalked them up to some school counselor wanting us to be less depressed about our lives. That is until I saw these words modeled in real life. I recently was blessed with the opportunity to travel to Africa on a mission trip. While being there I was witness to such astounding, mind-blowing poverty; I was rendered speechless. The every day horrors of these people's lives broke my heart. But the all-encompassing joy they carried like a shield mended it back together. These people's choice to be happy no matter the circumstance is a true testimony to the power of a positive attitude.

Also while in Africa, we handed out shoes. To a child here in the United States, getting a pair of shoes might bring a smile. To the children there, a pair of shoes brought tears of joy. Their grateful hearts allowed for so much more joy and happiness.

I came home from this trip passionate about life and wanting to live it to the fullest. However that can't happen if you are constantly unhappy. So I challenge you to select a better attitude, be grateful, and choose happiness.

**Score Point 4**

In this essay the writer asserts that “happiness is a choice based on your attitude, and your level of gratitude.” Using a personal anecdote, the writer supports this position by developing the ideas of attitude and gratitude in succession, first by effectively describing the joyful attitude the student witnessed among impoverished people in Africa. Second, the writer strengthens the position by recounting with detail the gratitude of these children when presented with new shoes. By focusing on the relationship between attitude and gratitude, the writer is able to unify and deeply develop the essay. In addition, the writer has used her unique view of the world to make the essay thoughtful and engaging. The writer’s command of language (I was rendered speechless; broke my heart . . . mended it back together; joy they carried like a shield) further enhances the effectiveness of this accomplished writing performance.

What is happiness? For centuries, researchers worked long and hard to determine the definition of happiness. Ask anyone on the street and they would reply with something along these lines: "Happiness is found within you." However, this reply may not necessarily prove true. People cannot always choose happiness; external conditions and internal willpower both heavily influence the true state of happiness.

External conditions consist of everything — from the air one breathes to the things one sees to the food one eats all contribute as external conditions. Drifting away from a literal standpoint, internal conditions are also determined by external factors — falling induces pain, bacteria create infections, exams trigger stress accumulation, and so on. In conclusion, anything around a person can majorly influence that person's happiness.

The willpower one chooses to exert lightens up their spirits — a term for inducing happiness. Holocaust captors such as Anne Frank and the countless slaves of the U.S. South remained joyous despite such imprisonment due to hope for freedom and prosperity later in life. The Buddhist concept of reincarnation ran along these lines as well; — a desire for happiness and prosperity in another life yielded Buddhists the willpower to perform proficient deeds in their current life. Greater happiness results from greater willpower.

True happiness exists due to ideal external conditions and unimagined willpower, not necessarily by some decision. In a way, asking anyone for the answer to happiness is the right answer — ideal determination would drive one to make themselves joyful. While the true meaning of happiness remains undetermined, the path to true happiness can be found ideally within you and your world.

#### Score Point 4

The writer of this essay recognizes the complexity of the issue by taking the position that "external conditions and internal willpower both heavily influence the true state of happiness." The writer examines these opposing ideas in a logical manner throughout the essay. First, the writer develops the idea of the effect of external factors on happiness by citing specific examples (air, food, falling, bacteria, and exams). Then the writer develops the idea of willpower by describing the conditions suffered by individuals or groups (Anne Frank, slaves in the U.S. South, and Buddhists) whose willpower enabled them to find happiness. The classification organizational strategy the student uses throughout the composition is particularly well suited to the persuasive task and contributes to the overall quality of this accomplished writing performance.

Human resilience is often underestimated. Our conscious mind has the power to fix itself, if we allow it to. The things that people have overcome and the lives that happy people lead stand as a testament to the fact that we can choose to enjoy ourselves.

People do awful things to each other and experience terrible tragedies, but still seem to come out okay. Some people lose loved ones and have to keep going. I personally know several young people who have lost parents but have recovered and now lead good lives.

Other times people are put through terrible ordeals and only survive through their will to live. The reason we know how awful the Holocaust was is because survivors made the effort to recover and learn to be happy again. Had they no desire to live well again, they wouldn't have come as far.

Some of the happiest people don't lead perfect lives because they realized that perfection isn't necessary to be happy. Also, some of the least happy are the ones who focus too much on superficial things like money. Japan has a notoriously low rate of happiness because they're taught to work hard with little regard for personal mental well-being. If their goal was to be happy rather than to study, work, and bring home a paycheck, they could easily make something out of their lives.

It's arguable that someone who has everything has to be happier than someone who has nothing, but happiness comes in many forms. It's up to the individual to put aside the bad and believe in what's good. Many have already come from the lowest places to find happiness again, proving that it's really up to a decision and an effort to be happy.

#### Score Point 4

In this essay the writer asserts that “we can choose to enjoy ourselves,” and that due to our resilience, “Our conscious mind has the power to fix itself, if we allow it to.” The student recognizes the complexity of the issue and sets up an effective organizing structure, juxtaposing those who choose to be happy with those who do not. The essay includes numerous, well-chosen examples of people who have suffered losses but who nonetheless “survive through their will to live.” In contrast to these examples, the writer cites Japan’s “notoriously low rate of happiness,” which, according to the student, results from the emphasis in Japan on “study, work, and bring home a paycheck” at the expense of choosing to be happy. Throughout the essay, the sentence-to-sentence connections enhance the flow of the essay by clearly showing the relationships among ideas, making this accomplished essay easy to follow.



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