



# **English I Writing**

## **Expository Scoring Guide April 2013**

# English I Writing Expository Prompt

Read the following quotation.

Take risks. Ask big questions. Don't be afraid to make mistakes; if you don't make mistakes, you're not reaching far enough.

—David Packard,  
*co-founder of Hewlett-Packard*

Taking a risk means acting without knowing whether the outcome will be good. Think carefully about this statement.

Write an essay explaining why it is sometimes necessary to take a chance.

Be sure to —

- clearly state your thesis
- organize and develop your ideas effectively
- 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 explanatory 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 topic specified in the prompt, but the thesis statement is missing, unclear, or illogical. The writer may fail to maintain focus on the topic, 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 essay is ineffective because the writer uses details and examples that 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 expository writing task.

### Use of Language/Conventions

- ❑ The writer's word choice may be vague or limited. It reflects little or no awareness of the expository purpose and does not establish a tone appropriate to the task. The 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.

Roller coaster rides are my number one fear. I can't stand going super fast. I feel like I am going to fall off and die. I even get scared when I watch people do it. I wished, and said to myself, "why can't I be like them? and risk it?"

I was sick and tired of people calling me a "chicken" and "loser." So I wanted to risk it and go to "Sixflags." My friends and I bought our tickets online. Saturday was my "death" day. My friends were so surprised I was gonna do this, and so was I. Saturday came, I got ready, and soon we all got there. My heart was racing super fast, and I felt dizzy. We got in, and I told my friends to ride the little rides first. They agreed, until we saw the "Superman." I was just about to run off, but they caught me. We went on the ride and I was sweating. In three counts we went up high, and fast.

The ride was so much fun, and very beautiful when you saw high up. Now that I rode this fast ride, I have more confidence on riding all the others. Later, I did. I am so happy, and glad I risked it. Now when I go to "Sixflags," I am not scared.

#### Score Point 1

In this very limited writing performance, the student provides no thesis statement and uses a narrative strategy—a story about riding a scary rollercoaster at Six Flags—to present ideas about taking a chance. The result is an essay with an organizing structure that is inappropriate to the explanatory task. Although most ideas are related to the topic of taking a chance, the details the writer chooses to include are inappropriate to the purpose and specific demands of the prompt. In addition, the writer's word choice reflects little or no awareness of the expository purpose and does not establish an appropriate tone.

Sometimes taking a chance is necessary because you may always regret what might have happen if you would have took a risk. If you take a chance and it was a bad idea than you'll learn from your mistake. People who don't take chances may never reach thier full potential because they are either living in fear or their letting something get in their way. The reason their not doing something about it is because they are scared to take a chance. Sometimes you have to act upon things only because it make you happy. Because if you act on things only to make others happy than you'll never be happy. So, not only are taking chances necessary, but taking chances you want to take is just as but if not more important than taking chances.

### Score Point 1

The writer presents several disconnected ideas that are centered on the possible effects of taking a chance, such as not having regrets and making yourself happy. Because the writer has not included a functional thesis statement, the explanation is difficult to follow. The student shifts abruptly from idea to idea, demonstrating she has difficulty linking sentences together. This lack of sentence-to-sentence connections interrupts the coherence of the essay. In addition, the writer's word choice is vague, causing the development to be hard to follow. Overall, the lack of focus and coherence and the vague development cause this response to be a very limited writing performance, resulting in an ineffective essay.

sometimes it is necessary to take a chance  
because what if your math teacher is  
showing you how to do a math problem  
and you don't get it take the chance  
to ask him can he do it again and  
Don't think your stupid for asking because  
when you pass the test are you going to  
feel stupid then sometimes it is not necessary  
to take a chance because what if you where  
Drunk don't take the chance of Drive  
home because what if you get pulled  
over then what you gonna do or  
what if you Die . sometimes it's ok to  
take a chance sometimes it's not so  
Don't feel stupid and don't be  
stupid just make the right and  
not a mistake

### Score Point 1

The writer provides the thesis that sometimes it is necessary and other times unnecessary to take a chance. To support this thesis, the writer offers two hypothetical examples. Although the writer attempts to develop the two examples, neither the “asking questions” idea nor the “driving drunk” idea is sufficiently developed. Additionally, the lack of sentence boundaries disrupts the fluency of the writing, making the piece difficult to understand. The insufficient development and the lack of sentence boundaries cause this response to be a very limited writing performance.

Life is all about taking risks. If you don't take risks you will never find out what would of happen or- not have happened if you would have taken that risk. Taking risks can be a good thing to do sometimes, but can also be a bad thing. You never wanna take too many risks, because some of them can turn out to be real bad, but then some of them can also be real good.

Taking risks can lead you in a verry good direction in your life but sometimes the risk you took will turn out wrong. And if it dose turn out wrong it is ok because their are alot more risk that are waiting to be taken.

#### Score Point 1

In this very limited writing performance, the writer attempts to support the thesis that taking risks can be a good thing to do sometimes, but risk-taking can also be a bad thing. However, support for this idea consists of vague statements (some risks can turn out bad, but then some of them can also be real good) that do not contribute to the effective development of the essay. This vague word choice impedes the clarity of the essay. In addition, the lack of sentence-to-sentence connections and the repetition of the good/bad idea, without providing clarifying details, disrupt the flow of the piece.

## 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 expository task.
- ❑ Most ideas are generally related to the topic specified in the prompt, but the writer's thesis statement is weak or somewhat unclear. The lack of an effective thesis 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 essay is superficial because the writer uses details and examples that 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 expository writing task.

### Use of Language/Conventions

- ❑ The writer's word choice may be general or imprecise. It reflects a basic awareness of the expository purpose but does little to establish a tone appropriate to the task. The 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.



Taking chances is one of the biggest hardest parts of life. I mean what if The United States never took the chance to fight for Freedom where would we all be right now? Taking chances can either make you or break you. They will either make you a way stronger person or they will knock you down to the point where only you can be the one to help you back up. If you don't take chances where does that put you in life? It puts on the same boring level as every other person on the planet. If you didn't take chances what would make you any different from anyone else? What if Michael Jordan never took the chance to try out for Basketball. He would be a nobody he would have gotten nowhere in life. He could be living at home with his mom working at McDonalds or something. But he took a chance and made something out of his life.

### Score Point 2

The writer offers the weak thesis that taking chances is “one of the biggest, hardest parts of life” and attempts to develop support for this position using rhetorical questions (Where does that put you in life? What would make you different from anyone else?). The student tries to philosophically discuss the thesis, but for the most part this explanation is superficial because it is too briefly presented. The writer adds some specificity in the Michael Jordan example, but this explanation is also superficially developed. Most of the other ideas are less specific and only generally related to the thesis. Much of this generality is due to the writer’s reliance on a weak thesis to guide the focus of the piece. Overall, this essay represents a basic writing performance.

Taking a chance when a problem comes up is really good. Without taking the risk you would not know what could have happen, you would be less affraid next time, and you can learn from your mistakes.

When taking a chance in a problem can be good because you would know what happen. Life will have problems and those problems will have desicions on whether to take a risk or not. It is like saying "all in or all out". If you dont risk something whatever you are trying to achieve will not happen.

After taking the risk once you will be less afraid next time. When you make a mistake, that mistake will get you more prepare for next time.

Moreover, when making a lot of mistakes you start learning from them. That same mistake will get into your head and you will not do it again. By learning from your mistakes you are smarter because you know more things.

Taking a chance will get you to know what will happen, will be less afraid for next time, and you also learn from your mistakes.

### Score Point 2

In the first paragraph of this basic writing performance, the student establishes the thesis that taking a chance when problems arise is a good thing because otherwise people would not know what could have happened, they will be less afraid next time, and they can learn from any mistakes made. Using the universal "you" throughout the piece, the student uses a cause-and-effect organizational strategy. However, the student is hampered by the formulaic five-paragraph nature of his organizational strategy. Because of a lack of an effective thesis linking all three disparate ideas together, the student is unable to produce a piece that has a strong focus. The student is also unable to develop the essay with any substance. In addition, the student's uncontrolled sentences and general word choice make the essay difficult to understand. This lack of control weakens the overall effectiveness of the essay.

Taking risk is sometimes a good thing to do, its always good to take a chance. People in life take chance's not knowing what the outcome will be. America said lets fly to the moon, but we didnt know if it would work or fail. Making that one decision can change your life forever. It is always necessary to take risk.

People for generations have made mistakes, but they overcome those mistakes and took chances.

If the odds were against you in a football game, but you knew a play that would win the game would you take that chance. Chance will always come to you in life, but its up to you if you want to take it or not.

Without chance we would not have all the technology we would today. Whenever my grades go down I ask my teacher for a chance to redue my grade. The phrase "you only live once" comes to my mind whenever I need to take a chance.

You can only hurt yourself by not taking risk. Still take sometime and think about what your doing. Dont just go rushing into things. And always remember you only live once and always take chances.

### Score Point 2

In this essay, the writer asserts that making "that one decision can change your life forever. It is always necessary to take risk." To support this thesis, the writer briefly discusses and partially presents various examples: going to the moon, coaching a football game, developing technology, and asking the teacher for a "re-do." Although it is logical to assume each of these examples could be life changing in some way, transitions from paragraph to paragraph and connections between sentences are too weak to support the flow of the essay or show the relationships among these ideas. Overall, the writer's response represents a basic writing performance.

"Take risks. Ask big questions. Don't be afraid to make mistakes; if you don't make mistakes, you're not reaching far enough." A man by the name of David Packard once said.

In life you have to take chances, there has been many points in my lifetime where I have had to take a chance. Not knowing whether my outcome was going to be good or bad. Jeremy Lin is a point guard in the National Basketball Association. At one point in his career there was a time where he wouldn't get any playing time because he was doing everything the way his coaches had wanted it. Yet, he still didn't get a lot of playing time. So he said to himself, that if he strikes out, he is going to strike out the way he wants to. So this young athlete took his chance and decided to play the way he wanted to. Sure enough, he made it big in the NBA. He is now the starting point guard for the New York Knicks. This is why some point in your lifetime you have to take a chance.

### Score Point 2

In this basic writing performance, the writer establishes the weak thesis that sometimes people have to take chances in their lifetimes. In the second paragraph, the student begins talking about his own life, and the reader is made to believe that the entire paragraph will be a personal anecdote; however, the student abruptly shifts the focus of the paper to a discussion of NBA player Jeremy Lin. The lack of a transition between these two ideas interferes with the flow of the essay. The writer develops some support by providing the minimally developed example of Lin's rise to stardom as the result of taking a risk; however, the writer misses opportunities to describe how the coaches wanted Lin to play their way even though it was not Lin's style. The information the writer includes about Lin is explanatory and relevant, but the word choice is general (So this young athlete took his chance and decided to play the way he wanted to). The essay remains superficial throughout because details are only briefly presented.

## 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 expository task.
- ❑ The writer establishes a clear thesis statement. Most ideas are related to the thesis and are focused on the topic 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 because the writer uses details and examples that are specific and appropriate, adding some substance to the essay.
- ❑ 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 expository 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 expository purpose and establishes a tone appropriate to the task. The word choice usually contributes to the quality and clarity of the essay.
- ❑ Sentences are varied and adequately controlled, for the most part contributing 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.

Taking risks is important to people's success. Some risks may be dangerous, even life threatening, with an unknown outcome. Although taking chances can be harmful, they can certainly be beneficial as well.

Risk-taking is an important strategy used by many successful people in the past and present. Benjamin Franklin took a risk by tying a small key to the end of a kite and flying it out into a severe thunder storm. Lightning struck the kite and traveled down to the key. Benjamin Franklin had taken this risk, and although dangerous, had discovered electricity. If he hadn't have taken that risk, we could still be using oil lanterns to light up a dark house.

Taking chances is an importance to success and progress. Although the outcome is unknown, and the process could be dangerous, it could greatly impact and positively change the lives of millions of people.

### Score Point 3

The writer of this satisfactory essay establishes the clear thesis that while taking chances can be dangerous, it is important to the success and progress of humanity. This thesis is stated clearly in both the introductory and concluding paragraphs. Effectively using one historical example, the writer supports her thesis by providing a specific explanation of Benjamin Franklin's work discovering electricity. Sufficient sentence-to-sentence connections help produce a clear explanation in this straightforward and pertinent example. The overall development of the explanation reflects some thoughtfulness. The student's word choice helps establish an appropriate tone, and a good command of conventions strengthens the presentation.



In life, there are opportunities. With opportunities come choices. And some choices may require taking a chance. Some people like to play it safe, but those people find that they will eventually have to take a chance.

People who don't step out of their comfort zones may become sheltered, and some might say "boring." Being shy is very popular in the general population, and some might even have social anxiety disorders. Society has grown into Campbell's soup cans - labeled. Everyone has some sort of label, which may boost or down-right mutilate someone's self esteem. Kids who may prefer to sit at home and read, play online games, or spend time with their family might be labeled as a "nerd" or a "geek." Those people's comfort zones are most likely just at home or at school.

In some situations, you HAVE to step out of your comfort zone. I once read a quote saying, "To get something you've never had, you have to do something you've never done." Which is a very true quote. In 2010, I found out there were auditions for a children's Christmas play at a local community college. I took a chance by auditioning and got a part. Even though I only had four lines, I was still able to experience the magic of it all, helping me inch closer to my dream - becoming an actress.

Chances are necessary to be successful in life. It's good to stay sheltered and be comfortable, but it's better to take chances and play the wild card every once in a while.

### Score Point 3

In this satisfactory piece, the writer provides the clear thesis that although it is good to remain comfortable, it is better to take chances because they are necessary for success in life. The student develops the idea that while social labels make people tentative about leaving their comfort zone, the writer's own experience taking a risk led her to her first small success as an actress. The inclusion of details and examples that are specific and appropriate adds some substance to the essay. The progression of ideas is generally logical and controlled, and the writer's word choice is clear and specific, helping establish a tone that is appropriate to the explanatory task.

There are many different types of personalities out there. Some are big and bold on the outside yet quiet and shy on the inside while some are very meek on the outside, but inside is a vast wonderland of ideas and feelings yet to be expressed. Everybody has a little shyness in them and owns a reluctance to be who they truly are. What people don't realize is showing your true colors might be the best thing that has ever happened to you. Everyone who is successful in the music industry, acting, sports, art, and you name it has taken a risk to try. These people did not know if they would be popular or win games or if their pieces would be displayed but they gave it a shot and that is what matters. Don't misunderstand me though, I'm not saying people will love you everytime you put yourself out there because someone is always going to try and put you down but what shows character is if you get back up and keep going. If you fall three times, you get up four and never quit trying to make it to the top. Rejection is bound to happen but whether you receive success and acceptance or not is completely up to you. That is why the shy ones never get noticed even though they have so much potential and depth. Don't sit on the sidelines watching the game, go play!

**Score Point 3**

The writer of this satisfactory essay establishes the clear thesis that taking a chance and showing your true colors may be the best thing that can ever happen to you. To support this thesis, the student links a general discussion about famous people to a philosophical example. The student creates an appropriate tone by using direct address. Demonstrating a good understanding of the expository task, the student uses sufficiently developed details to encourage others to push past rejection so that they can develop their own personalities.



What would life be like if the colonists didn't rebel against the british, if the Wright brothers didn't challenge the status quo that you couldn't fly. Would the world just be dull? Could the world even have a meaning with no risk, no question, and no mistakes. Why is it necessary to take a chance sometimes in the world we live in?

If you don't take a chance what will you learn, nothing. Taking a chance is how you learn, sometimes for the good and sometimes bad. The colonists took a chance and rebelled against the biggest armies at the time and it paid off. The Wright brothers could of sat back and believed everyone that you can't fly, but they didn't and they learned you can. You can't become the greatest if you don't take a chance and step out in the line of fire. If you don't take a chance you can't be stopped because you haven't started.

Taking a chance is not sometimes necessary, it's always necessary. You can't become something with out taking a chance, not going with the crowd, or even attempting to step out of your comfort zone.

### Score Point 3

In the final paragraph, the writer presents a clear thesis: taking a chance is not sometimes necessary; it's always necessary. The writer effectively anchors the essay by posing rhetorical questions, speculating about what would have happened in our nation's history had brave citizens not challenged the status quo. For the most part, the ideas progress logically, but there is wordiness at the beginning of the second paragraph. Although the essay is coherent, it is not always unified. The student provides two disparate ideas of the colonists fighting the Revolutionary War and the Wright Brothers attempting to fly but does not provide a transition or better development that would link these ideas together. Specific word choice, a cause/effect organizational strategy, and concrete details add some substance to this satisfactory expository essay.

## 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 expository task.
- ❑ The writer establishes a clear thesis statement. All ideas are strongly related to the thesis and are focused on the topic 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 effective because the writer uses details and examples that are specific and well chosen, adding substance to the essay.
- ❑ The essay is thoughtful and engaging. The writer may choose to use his/her unique experiences or view of the world as a basis for writing or to connect ideas in interesting ways. The writer develops the essay in a manner that demonstrates a thorough understanding of the expository writing task.

### Use of Language/Conventions

- ❑ The writer's word choice is purposeful and precise. It reflects a keen awareness of the expository purpose and maintains a tone appropriate to the task. The 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.

There are many areas where it is necessary to take a chance. One such example is the field of medical research. In many cases, there is a treatment for whatever particular ailment a person is suffering from. For sinus infections, there are antibiotics. For pain, there are acetaminophenes and NSAIDs. To prevent diseases, there are all kinds of vaccines. All of these medical breakthroughs were discovered because, at some point, someone took a risk. Even today, many medicines are the result of trial and error. Imagine this situation: People in a lab mix up a cocktail of compounds that they hypothesize may help cure or treat cancer. They take a chance and inject it into mice who have cancer. They observe the mice for while and some die, but most of the mice injected with the medicine begin to improve. Eventually, through tweaking the drug until the mortality rate of mice injected with it is lower, they get permission to do a clinical trial. The results of the trial support what they found with the mice; their medicine cures cancer. The drug is tested again and approved by the FDA. There is now a government approved drug that cures cancer. This only was able to (hypothetically) happen because someone took a chance. They had no way of knowing whether or not it would work, but they tried it anyway. Without anyone taking a similar gamble and going through a similar process, many modern medicines would not be in existence and we would not be able to see their benefits.

#### Score Point 4

The writer uses the specific and well-chosen example of medical research to support the thesis that the benefits of modern medicines would not exist without someone being willing to take chances. The progression of ideas is logical and very well controlled as the writer provides a hypothetical explanation of the steps and research methodology that might occur when finding a cure for cancer. The writer connects ideas in interesting ways with strong sentence-to-sentence connections that enhance the flow of the essay by clearly showing the relationships among these ideas. The writer's train of thought is easy to follow, and the word choice is purposeful and precise, reflecting a keen awareness of the expository purpose. This word choice strongly contributes to the quality and clarity of the piece. In addition, the writer demonstrates a consistent command of conventions with only minor errors evident. Overall, the essay represents an accomplished writing performance.

The most vital part that has developed mankind is risk taking. Indeed, taking risks means that losses are almost inevitable. Yet, the very possibility of gaining from the result of risk taking means that risks are necessary. In fact, while taking risks may cause significant losses, it is the very possibility of gain that has made risk taking so essential to the development of humanity.

Back in the 1400s, no one had any idea that the world was round. Yet one bright mind had this idea, and then promptly sailed westward, unknown to many others what would happen to him. Conventional wisdom said his ship would only sail to the edge of the earth. Yet, Columbus was willing to take that risk, in hopes of finding a new route to India. This opened the world to a completely new chunk of land. The risk of not finding anything and perhaps getting lost has instead produced a great discovery for our civilization.

This idea of risk taking is also prevalent in science. Medical researchers risk having spent years of their work and time in vain and producing no results. At the same time, the possibility of success has produced numerous medical breakthroughs that have advanced humanity. Physicists also devote so much of their life with developing theories, with the risk of to be only proven wrong later. In almost every field of science, scientists risk devoting their time and effort only to have their experiments fail or be proven wrong later, yet taking those risks have also produced spectacular results which developed our world to a great extent.

Even today, risk taking is important to advance our society. Bill Gates and Steve Jobs are two of the most recognized names in technology today. Flashing back, however, one would see the two men dropping out of college, not knowing if their ideas would work. It was scary for both of these men, but risking their future caused them both to be the godfathers of modern day technology.

Risks may not always benefit one, yet they are essential to develop our society. Developments in our world, from discovering new land, making scientific breakthroughs, to modern-day advances in technology, are the results of taking great risks.

#### Score Point 4

In a non-formulaic five-paragraph essay, the writer of this accomplished essay establishes the clear thesis that taking risks is essential to the development of humanity. To support this thesis, the writer utilizes three *related* examples—the exploration and discovery achieved by pioneers such as Columbus, medical researchers, and Bill Gates and Steve Jobs. Each of these well-chosen examples is conceptually relevant to the thesis and strongly supports the writer's central idea. Meaningful transitions from paragraph to paragraph link the three examples and enhance the flow of the essay, making the writer's train of thought easy to follow. Word choice is purposeful and precise, and the sentences are varied and well controlled.

There is a saying that goes as follows: If you do what you've always done, you'll get what you've always had. I know this phrase to be completely true from personal experience. because, if you don't take chances how will you ever learn or gain something new?

I am not a very good public speaker. I get all the nervous symptoms like shaky voice, loss of train of thought and sweaty palms. Earlier this year I took a chance and joined the Lincoln Douglas debate team. The team was five members strong, and together we wrote our cases and practiced presenting each side of the argument, affirmative and negative. Slowly, but surely I gained confidence and became a better speaker.

Just last week was our UIL competition. On my first round, I was a scared and nervous wreck, but somehow I still won the round. By the time I debated my fourth and final round I was a lot more sure of myself. When the final results were displayed I found out that I qualified for Regionals!

If I hadn't taken the chance and joined the team, I wouldn't have such an accomplishment under my belt and a chance to compete at Regionals in April.

#### Score Point 4

In this accomplished piece, the writer skillfully employs a personal anecdote based on her experience as a reluctant member of the Lincoln-Douglas debate team. The writer provides a clear thesis in the form of a rhetorical question (if you don't take chances, how will you ever learn or gain something new?). The anecdotal example is well chosen because its details serve as solid support for the thesis. The writer's logical progression of thought is strengthened by strong sentence-to-sentence connections, enhancing the flow of the essay. Sentences are varied and well controlled, and the writer's word choice is precise and purposeful. In addition, the writer demonstrates a consistent command of conventions, contributing to the effectiveness of the essay.

A lot of people struggle with the concept of taking chances in their lives. Sometimes people think that if they don't know what the outcome of their actions will be, then it is not worth taking the chance. However, there will be a time in everyone's life where taking a risk is the best choice because it could end up making all the difference, and potentially change your future.

Some people go through life with a very clear idea of what they should be doing, and how everything should fall into place. Others go through life without a care in the world, always taking chances no matter how risky the situation may be. It is important to find a healthy balance between these two personalities. You shouldn't be afraid to take risks because the outcome may not be what you wanted. Meanwhile, you shouldn't constantly take huge risks without having a reasonable motive behind your actions. When you do take a chance, it should be on something that you are willing to take a risk for, and it should mean a lot to you. Living in fear of failing at something is not the way to look at life. If you never take a chance, you never see what could have been. There have been countless instances in history where hugely successful people have had to take a risk to get to where they are today. An important time in your life to take risks would be when deciding what you want to do for the rest of your life. For example, if it is your dream to go to Harvard and become a lawyer, but you are too nervous to apply because you may not get in, apply anyway. You never know what could happen, and in that situation, you have nothing to lose by at least trying.

When it comes down to what your future holds, that is an ideal opportunity to take chances. Sometimes taking a risk could change the course of your life for the better, and that is when taking chances truly pays off.

#### Score Point 4

The final sentence of the opening paragraph serves as a clear thesis and a philosophical focal point in this accomplished writing performance. The writer mixes a slightly persuasive tone with a strongly philosophical explanation focused on the positive potential that exists for everyone in risk-taking. The writer sustains focus on this central idea throughout the essay and effectively develops support by using philosophical examples that are well chosen. The piece is unified and coherent because strong sentence-to-sentence connections make the writer's train of thought evident and easy to follow.