



The purpose of these sample test materials is to orient teachers and students to the appearance of passages and prompts on paper-based accommodated B.E.S.T. Writing tests. Each spring, students in grades 4–10 are administered one text-based writing prompt for the B.E.S.T. Writing test. Students will respond to either an expository prompt or to an argumentative prompt. An example of a text-based writing prompt for each grade is available for practice. To familiarize students with the response formats, teachers may encourage students to practice with each type of prompt within a grade band.

The following B.E.S.T. Writing sample test materials are available on the Florida Statewide Assessments Portal as shown below:

**Elementary Grade Band**

Grade 4 - Expository

Grade 5 - Argumentative

**Middle Grade Band**

Grade 6 - Expository

Grade 7 - Argumentative

Grade 8 - Expository

**High School Grade Band**

Grade 9 - Argumentative

Grade 10 - Expository

The sample test materials are not intended to guide classroom instruction.

To offer students a variety of texts on the B.E.S.T. Writing tests, authentic and copyrighted stories, poems, and articles appear as they were originally published, as requested by the publisher and/or author. While these real-world examples do not always adhere to strict style conventions and/or grammar rules, inconsistencies among sources should not detract from students' ability to understand and answer questions about the texts.

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# Writing Prompt

Write an argumentative essay about whether the U.S. capital should remain in Washington, D.C., or move to a new location.

Your argumentative essay must be based on this prompt and topic, and it must incorporate ideas and evidence found in the sources provided.

Use your best writing to complete an essay that

- is focused on your claim;
- combines evidence from multiple sources with your own elaboration to develop your ideas;
- acknowledges at least one counterclaim;
- is organized and includes transitions within and among ideas;
- provides citations for quoted material and source ideas; and
- demonstrates correct use of grammar and language appropriate to the task.

Write your multiparagraph essay to an academic audience in the space provided.

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Read the “Changing the Capital City” sources.

## Changing the Capital City

### Source 1: A Neighborhood Is Born

by Pamela Scott

- 1 [D]id you know that Washington D.C., was not our first or our only capital? The federal government under the Constitution set itself up in New York and then Philadelphia. Before that, American leaders met in a number of East Coast cities. The thing that makes Washington, D.C., so special is that it was specifically chosen to become the nation’s first permanent capital city. . . .
- 2 President George Washington selected the city’s actual site—farmland next to Georgetown, Maryland. Ships stopped there because they could not sail farther up the river. It was close to Great Falls, where a canal was being built. Having waterway access would allow the country’s rich inland agricultural products to be shipped to the coast for trading.
- 3 Washington chose French engineer Pierre Charles L’Enfant to design the city. L’Enfant believed that the new city would become the capital of a “Vast Empire.” So his 1791 proposal presented the largest city in the world at the time. . . .
- 4 Like most French artists of his time, L’Enfant included symbolic meanings in his design. For example, he wanted the President’s House to face down the Potomac River directly toward Washington’s home, Mount Vernon, in Virginia. L’Enfant also named the two avenues abutting the grounds around the President’s House “New York Avenue” and “Pennsylvania Avenue.” New York and Pennsylvania were the states where Washington served as the nation’s first president. . . .
- 5 In addition to the families of the government officials who became permanent residents, several other groups of Americans lived and worked in the president’s neighborhood during its early years. Some of the district’s original landowners remained close by and became part of the square’s elite society. “Mechanics,” as men in the building trades were called, moved to Washington because its many new buildings promised employment for several years. The men generally settled near the buildings on which they worked. . . .

- 6 Living next door to one another and helping to build and establish the new city created a sense of community among these groups.

Excerpt from "A Neighborhood Is Born" by Pamela Scott. Copyright © 2013 by Cobblestone. Reprinted by permission of Cricket Media via Copyright Clearance Center.

## **Source 2: Yes. Let's Move the Capital to Nebraska. Immediately.**

by Philip Bump

- 7 [T]here is no reason that the capital of the United States should still be in a humid carve-out on the East Coast. Let's build a new capital, in Nebraska. Like, immediately. Here's why:

### **Nebraska is the center of the United States.**

- 8 Well, almost. The actual geographic center of the U.S. is about five miles south of the Nebraska-Kansas border, northwest of the town of Lebanon, Kansas. But it's close enough for government work. . . .

### **It would be a massive stimulus project.**

- 9 When Malaysia decided it wanted to build a new capital city in the 1980s, it invested \$8.1 billion in doing so. . . . If the U.S. spent an equivalent amount, we'd be investing \$1.3 trillion in our new Washington. That's about 50 percent more than the federal government spent in the 2009 stimulus, and could benefit areas far beyond Nebraska alone. Raw materials from the Pacific Northwest, technology from California, a labor force from all 50 states.

- 10 Not to mention the ancillary<sup>1</sup> economic boost. All of the lobbying firms and contractors that now operate from Northern Virginia would move, headed to the plains of Nebraska. That would offer an additional economic spike in the region. . . .

<sup>1</sup>ancillary: providing additional support to an organization or industry

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**It would offer the chance to build the best city possible.**

- 11 A city focused on mass transit and walking. A city run on solar and wind. A city with offerings from the world’s best architects. Imagine what you could create if you were building a new city that was meant to demonstrate the best America had to offer, one that would help the country transition into this still-young century. Washington, D.C., as it stands, is a testament to strength and history. We could build a city that incorporates both of those things, but adds innovation, environmental stewardship, and a modern aesthetic.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup>aesthetic: look or style

Excerpt from “Yes. Let’s Move the Capital to Nebraska. Immediately.” by Philip Bump. Copyright © 2014 by The Atlantic. Reprinted by permission of Atlantic Media, Inc. via Copyright Clearance Center.

### **Source 3: Choosing a Capital**

by Chloe Thompson

- 12 Washington, D.C., has been the capital of the United States since 1790. Today, it is a large, diverse city with many important museums and historic sites. However, there are numerous reasons that moving the U.S. capital to another location could benefit the country.
- 13 Throughout the 1800s, people argued for moving the capital to another city. Arguments were particularly strong after the War of 1812, during which part of D.C.—and the White House—were burned. While most of these debates have faded away in modern times, some still feel that a different city would have more to offer as the nation’s seat of government.
- 14 One argument is for a more central and easily accessible location. D.C. is on the East Coast, making it far closer to one half of the country than the other. With the amount of travel government officials are required to do, this can cause issues. A more centralized city, such as Chicago or St. Louis, would make it equally easy for politicians and officials on both sides of the country to reach the capital.

## B.E.S.T. Writing Sample Items

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- 15 Another factor in choosing a capital is the city’s size and economic health. While D.C. has a sizable population, there are cities in the United States with far more people, businesses, and growth opportunities. New York City, Los Angeles, Chicago, Houston, and Phoenix are the five most populous cities in the country. Many other countries—such as the United Kingdom, Japan, and Mexico—have their capitals in the most populous cities. Since the government represents the people, it would make sense to locate the seat of government where the most people live.
- 16 Another reason to consider a different location is the rapid growth of industries such as technology that have a massive impact on the country. Some feel that the U.S. capital should be closer to where innovation is happening, arguing for a move to San Francisco or Seattle.
- 17 It may seem superficial, but yet another popular argument for a new capital city is pleasant weather. This argument against D.C. was used even in the 1800s and continues to be a consideration today. Cities like San Diego, Atlanta, and Jacksonville have high rankings for their number of warm, sunny days per year. Nice weather could lead to more visitors, from both other states and other countries, which would boost the capital city’s economy.
- 18 While it may seem troublesome to change an established capital, it has been done in modern times. Brazil moved its capital in 1960 due to overcrowding in the original location. Nigeria chose a new capital in 1991 in order to have a more central location and give access to more citizens. Other countries split the different branches of government into different locations or have a city that is considered the “traditional” capital and another that is the current seat of government.
- 19 While there are certainly reasons to keep Washington, D.C., as the nation’s capital and not upset the current order of things, it is interesting to consider other places our capital could be.

“Choosing a Capital” by Chloe Thompson. Written for educational purposes.

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## Source 4: The Real Secret of Washington, D. C. It's not all about politics, and in fact it's an extraordinary city.

by Moisés Naím

- 20 Many share the view that the U.S. capital is a dismal<sup>1</sup> place. . . .
- 21 A visit to the Library of Congress, the largest library in the world, or to one of the many dozens of museums in the city can surely open one's mind. Washington has the biggest museum complex in the world (which in 2014 was visited by three times as many people as the Louvre<sup>2</sup>) and the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts offers weekly opera, ballet, and music productions of international caliber. . . .
- 22 Here comes the revelation that will likely surprise [many]: The real secret of Washington, D.C., is that it is an extraordinary city. The harsh caricatures with which its critics commonly describe it have little in common with reality. Of course, the U.S. capital is a city where politics [are] important and very visible. And yes, political gridlock and dysfunction are rife. But Washington is much more than that.
- 23 For instance, Washington is home to the biggest center for biomedical research in the world, the National Institutes of Health (NIH), with nearly 6,000 scientists; 148 current and former NIH-supported researchers have received Nobel Prizes. The NIH's annual budget exceeds \$30 billion, an amount larger than the total budget of many nation states. It is also one of the most educated cities in the United States. . . .
- 24 [A]nother of Washington's assets is its diversity; more than 20 percent of the city's population was born outside of the U.S. as of 2011, with 35 percent of them coming from Asia, and about half (41 percent) coming from the Americas.
- 25 None of this means that the federal government, Congress, the thousands of lobbyists that try to influence both, and the enormous number of media outlets from all over the world that cover political Washington aren't an important part of the city. But they are only one part of it and, for a lot of the population, not even the most important part. Many other exceptional characteristics make non-political Washington the exceptional city that it actually is.

<sup>1</sup>dismal: depressing or gloomy

<sup>2</sup>the Louvre: a famous art museum in Paris

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Lined writing area with 25 horizontal lines.



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