



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 expository essay about the ways gold has been used throughout history.

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

Use your best writing to complete an essay that

- is focused on your central idea;
- combines evidence from multiple sources with your own elaboration to develop your ideas;
- 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.

Read the “Gold Throughout History” sources.

Gold Throughout History

Source 1: Gold’s Glittery Rewards

by Sarah Webb

1 Gold is a metal. It conducts electricity, and it can be shaped into sheets, long wires, or rings. Gold is an element—a substance made of one kind of atom. As an element, gold has its own square on the periodic table of chemical elements.

2 Gold also represents beauty and value, and it has done so for thousands of years. It’s part of our culture and history.

3 Why do we value gold so much? It has a distinctive color. No other metal is a shiny yellow. It’s also quite rare. . . .

Rare metal

4 Even though gold has many special properties, the main reason for its value is its rarity.

5 Researchers estimate that the total amount of gold ever mined would fit into 60 tractor trailers, [researcher Jim] Webster says. This might seem like a lot—until you compare it with iron. Iron mining and smelting companies produce six times that amount *every year*.

6 Because of its value, people have made coins out of gold, and banks store gold in the form of bars. Some people collect gold coins or trade gold in international markets. Its current value is more than \$600 per ounce.

Electronic gold

7 Most gold that’s mined today still goes into making jewelry. You also see it in Olympic medals and many other special awards, including the Oscar statuettes that honor movies.

8 But modern electronics and the journey into space have helped give gold an important place in the technology that we use every day.

B.E.S.T. Writing Sample Items

- 9 Audio and video cables often have gold-coated plugs for two reasons. Gold conducts electricity better than all but two other metals, Webster says. And because gold doesn't corrode,¹ the surface on the plug stays clean.
- 10 For the same reasons, computer chips also often contain gold, as do a variety of other electronic components.
- 11 We've also launched gold into space.
- 12 Gold reflects heat better than any other metal. The visor on an astronaut's helmet has an ultrathin layer of gold. The layer is thin enough to be transparent, so the astronaut can still see through it. But this thin layer reflects the sun's heat away from the astronaut.
- 13 The [American Museum of Natural History's] gold exhibit includes a helmet from the Apollo 11 mission, when astronauts first landed on the moon in 1969.
- 14 Even after thousands of years, gold remains a precious metal—one that has long been prized for its glitter and is now more useful than ever.

¹corrode: to wear away or decay

Excerpt from "Gold's Glittery Rewards" by Sarah Webb. Copyright © 2011 by Science News for Students. Reprinted by permission of Science News for Students via Copyright Clearance Center.

Source 2: Good as Gold

by Meg Moss

- 15 In 1972, archaeologists in Varna, Bulgaria, dug up some of the oldest gold objects ever found. The bracelets, necklaces, and headbands are 6,500 years old. Fresh from the dirt, they looked as if they'd just been polished. The ancient people who lived in these settlements didn't have writing or iron tools. But it's clear that like us, they loved gold.

The Lure of Gold

- 16 Gold is magical stuff. It's so soft you can cut it with a stone knife. It's easy to shape. It can be pounded into sheets thinner than tissue paper and stretched into slender wire. It's beautiful. Sometimes you

can find it just lying on the ground. And gold never rusts or tarnishes. It looks great forever.

17 Gold is born in space, when huge old stars collide. Long ago, meteorites rained down on the new planet Earth. Those space rocks scattered gold on Earth's surface. Today, scientists think that about one atom in every billion atoms of rock is gold. That's not much!

18 Gold often collects in quartz rocks. Over time, as the rock is worn away by wind and water, the gold washes down into rivers. Ancient gold-hunters soon learned that where they found some gold, more was likely hiding.

Richest Man Ever?

19 The continent of Africa has always been rich in gold. Ancient Egyptians worked gold mines throughout their kingdom to supply royalty with jewelry, ornaments . . . and even sandals.

20 Other African kingdoms also mined gold. They hammered it into beautiful objects and traded it for goods from far away. In the 14th century, King Mansa Musa of Mali amassed so much gold that he may have been the richest man in the world, ever. When he made a pilgrimage to Mecca in 1324, his enormous caravan included 80 camels, each loaded with 300 pounds (136 kg) of gold. He spread so much gold around that it lost much of its worth. It took 10 years for gold to become valuable again.

Sweat of the Sun . . .

21 The ancient Inca people of South America also loved gold. They called it the sweat of the sun. In Mexico, the Aztecs amassed great collections of gold jewelry, dishware, ornaments, and idols. . . .

Back to Space

22 What do people do with gold today? Most is made into jewelry. Some is used in cellphones and other electronics. Gold also makes great heat shields on satellites and space helmets.

B.E.S.T. Writing Sample Items

- 23 And NASA’s newest telescope will be gold-plated. The James Webb Space Telescope has 18 big mirrors coated with a very thin layer of gold. Gold reflects the dim red light from distant galaxies better than any other material.
- 24 The Webb Telescope is aiming to launch in 2020. So some of the gold that rained down on the baby Earth may soon be back up in space—maybe snapping pictures of its distant home.

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Source 3: Cash, Charge, or . . . GOLD?

by Rachael Ann Mare

- 25 Have you ever seen real gold? It’s shiny and tough and is a bold, bright yellow color. It’s great for wedding rings and other jewelry. Some people even have gold teeth. But did you know that gold was used as money for thousands of years?
- 26 Gold was first used as money around 6,000 years ago in Mesopotamia (part of modern-day Iraq). Merchants used gold bars to pay for expensive things. The bars were all different sizes. They had to be weighed to find out how much they were worth. And they were heavy. These problems made gold bars hard to use.
- 27 About 2,600 years ago, the people of Lydia (where Turkey is today) began to use metal—and, eventually, gold—to make money. They made coins that were small and all weighed the same amount. People in nearby countries saw how easy it was to use these coins. Eventually, people in other parts of the world began to make their own coins.
- 28 As wealthy people got more and more gold, they wanted a place to keep it safe. In England, in the late 1600s, people called goldsmith bankers began offering safekeeping for gold. The goldsmith bankers gave their customers a note in exchange for their gold. Bank notes were promises to pay back the gold. In time, people began to use the bank notes instead of gold to pay for things.
- 29 Today, gold is important to many people. It seems that this precious yellow metal will never go out of style.

Amazing Gold Facts

- 30 Unlike other metals, gold never rusts or tarnishes. . . .
- 31 One ounce of gold can be stretched into a wire many miles long, or hammered into 100 square feet of foil.
- 32 The *Apollo 11* astronauts who landed on the Moon in 1969 wore gold-coated visors to protect their eyes from the intense sunlight.
- 33 Today, gold is used in computers, cell phones, telescopes, space shuttles, lasers, eye surgery, arthritis treatment, and much more.

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Source 4: Pages of Gold

by Sarah Novak

- 34 Glittering crowns, glowing halos, gleaming vines, even glistening words—all these golden treasures can be found in special book illustrations. These pictures and decorations are called illuminations. Illuminate means to light up—and centuries ago, real gold was used on the pages of books to make them shine and sparkle.
- 35 Before the printing press was invented, books were made by hand. . . . Words were written on the parchment by a scribe, using ink in a pen made from a feather or quill. The scribe left blank spaces on some pages for illustrations. These included decorated margins, big initial letters, and detailed pictures.
- 36 Next the illuminator carefully added gold to the page. First, a sticky concoction made from clay or sap was painted on specific areas. Then a very thin piece of gold, called gold leaf, was attached there. The gold was polished to bring out the shine. To complete the decoration, vivid colors of paint and ink were added. Finally, the pages were stitched together inside wooden boards covered with leather or cloth.
- 37 In the early Middle Ages, most books were made in monasteries. . . . The scribes' workshop was called a *scriptorium*. Later on in the Middle Ages, the demand for books increased. Books with lavish illuminations became a status symbol for wealthy people. Workshops for each step of making a book were established in cities.

Did you know?

- 38 In medieval France, streets often were named for the craftspeople who worked there. For instance, *Rue des Enlumineurs* was “the street of the illuminators.”
- 39 Today, most illuminated books are in museums or special libraries. And their golden pages still shine as they did 1,000 years ago.

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Lined writing area with 25 horizontal lines.

A large rectangular area containing 25 horizontal lines, intended for writing or drawing.



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