

Critical Skills Assignment Answer Key

Critical Reading and Opinion Writing (A)

Starter feedback for correct and incorrect answers is in **blue**. Use or adapt the feedback in this answer key as you grade each student assignment. Many answers will vary. The model answers demonstrate what a complete student response should include, but they do not represent the only correct response to most questions.

Read the story. Then answer the questions.

Dumpster Dog

(1) Marc scuffed downstairs to the recycling bins. He didn't mind dumping Mrs. Simon's newspapers because she was a nice after-school babysitter. But he didn't like her cat; Fang attacked ankles!

(2) The lid screeched when Marc opened the paper bin, and he wanted to screech too. He'd spent all last week drafting his list. He thought it would prove how much he wanted a dog. Even Mom thought it was a good list.

(3) I won't be lonely with a dog to talk to.

Taking care of a dog will help me be more responsible.

He will be a guard dog and watch out for us.

It will be good exercise to walk a dog.

Taking care of an animal will help me care more about others.

Still she'd said, "Someday. The landlord won't allow it in this apartment."

(4) "But Mrs. Simon has Fang," Marc said.

(5) "Yes, but cats don't bark," Mom explained, "and they don't bother neighbors." Marc wanted to argue that Fang was a real bother, and he had the scratches to prove it, but it was no use. He'd have to wait until they moved.

(6) "I'll be a grandpa by then," Marc said aloud to a broken action figure that was staring at him from a pile between the Dumpsters. Someone had moved out, and the bins were overflowing. Besides the action figure, there were baskets, plastic bottles, a wooden skateboard, a flat soccer ball, and some rope.

(7) Marc stared at the junk then jumped up and grabbed a box. "That gives me an idea!" He rushed upstairs with a load hoping Mrs. Simon had some gray tape!

(8) "What's in the box?" his mom asked when she came to pick him up a couple of hours later.

(9) “Something I’ve always wanted,” Marc said over his shoulder as he rushed to their apartment. He could hardly wait to get in his room to put the finishing touches on his creation.

(10) “Come here, Boy,” he said as he opened the box and drew out the skateboard. He’d taped a milk jug and soda bottles to it for a body and legs. A cone-shaped basket and the soccer ball worked great as the nose and head with action-figure parts for the eyes and ears. Marc said, “You’re a mutt, Scraps, a real mix of a dog!” Then he realized that Scraps was already the first thing on his dog list—a friend to talk to!

(11) Marc cut the rope from the trash into long and short pieces. He tied the longer one to the end of the skateboard for a leash and taped the other to the milk jug for a tail. Then he unlaced his shoe and tied a shoestring to the tail. Whenever he wanted Scraps to wag he’d just pull. Perfect!

(12) “Come on,” Marc said, setting the skateboard on the floor and leading Scraps to the kitchen.

(13) “What on earth?” Mom said.

(14) “Meet Scraps, my Dumpster dog. He may not have fur and a heartbeat. But he doesn’t bark.”

(15) Mom laughed. “He won’t need food or water either.”

(16) “May I walk him?”

(17) “I guess, but he doesn’t need bathroom breaks.”

(18) “No, but it’s still my job,” Marc replied, thinking of the second item on his list. He felt like a proud and responsible pet owner already.

(19) Scraps clattered as Marc pulled him down the hall. Mrs. Simon opened her door to check on the racket. “You are so clever!” she said when Marc introduced her to his finished project. But her cat wasn’t impressed. Fang only gave a weak hiss from the sofa where he’d been all afternoon. Marc grinned. Number three. Fang didn’t dare attack with Scraps around!

(20) Marc picked up Scraps and carried him outside. He had walked the length of the park when he heard hoots. Some kids were pointing and coming his way. “Uh, oh. Here comes trouble!” Marc didn’t want to be teased so he picked up Scraps and started running. He retraced his steps and made it to his building in record time. Walking Scraps was more exercise than he’d expected!

(21) He was trudging upstairs when Mrs. Simon rushed out. She was carrying the pet carrier.

(22) “What’s wrong?”

(23) “It’s Fang,” Mrs. Simon gasped. “He hasn’t been right all afternoon.”

(24) Marc felt a pang of fear. Fang might be a pain but he didn't deserve to be sick! Mrs. Simon must be so worried. He would be, too.

(25) "I hope everything is okay," he called as Mrs. Simon hurried downstairs. And because he was a new pet owner he meant it.

Choose answers to multiple choice questions. Type responses to questions that ask you to write a response. Be sure to save your work.

1. Answer the questions about the story.

(a) Which statement **best** tells how Marc might like Fang’s actions to change?

- A. Fang would stop chasing and spitting at Marc.
- B. Fang would stop going after and clawing Marc’s legs.
- C. Fang would stop bothering what Marc was trying to build.
- D. Fang would stop sharpening his claws on Marc’s skateboard.

Teacher feedback: (The correct answer is B.)

(b) Which sentences from the story support the answer in Part (a)?

Choose **all** answers that are correct.

- A. Marc wanted to argue that Fang was a real bother, and he had the scratches to prove it, but it was no use. (Paragraph 5)
- B. “Yes, but cats don’t bark,” Mom explained, “and they don’t bother neighbors.” (Paragraph 5)
- C. But he didn’t like her cat; Fang attacked ankles! (Paragraph 1)
- D. Fang only gave a weak hiss from the sofa where he’d been all afternoon. (Paragraph 19)

Teacher feedback: (The correct answers are A and C.)

Score: (2 points – both (a) and (b) must be correct to earn 2 points, if (a) is correct and (b) is incorrect award 1 point, if (a) is incorrect, award 0 points.)

2. How do Marc’s feelings about wanting a dog affect his actions in the story?

Use evidence from the story to support your answer.

Model Answer

Marc likes dogs and wants one so much that he writes a list of reasons why he should have one and shows his mom. When that doesn’t help because of the landlord’s ban against dogs, Marc figures out how to have a dog anyway. He builds one out of junk. Since he wants a dog so much and is lonely, he talks to his fake dog. He also gives him a name and takes him on a walk as if he was a real dog. By pretending he has a real dog, Marc learns something about what it would be like to be a real pet owner.

Award points for specific answers as shown below (for a total of 0–2 points).

Points	Concept Addressed	Feedback for Student Answers
2	The answer describes how Marc's feelings about wanting a dog affect his actions in the story (1 point) and uses evidence from the story to support it (1 point).	Your answer should describe how Marc's feelings about wanting a dog affect his actions in the story and should use evidence from the story to support it.

Feedback for completely correct answer:

Your answer describes how Marc's feelings about wanting a dog affect his actions in the story and uses evidence from the story to support it.

3. Reread Paragraph 10. Answer the questions about the language in the story.

(a) Marc calls his dog a mutt. Which phrase **best** tells the meaning of the word *mutt* as Marc uses it in the story?

- A. a dog that is not real
- B. a dog that is very ugly
- C. a dog of many different breeds
- D. a dog of several different colors

Teacher feedback: (The correct answer is C.)

(b) Which statement best tells why Marc probably named his dog Scraps?

- A. Marc had always wanted to name his very first dog Scraps.
- B. Marc's mom's dog was named Scraps when she was a little girl.
- C. Marc wanted a name that showed that the dog was made from bits and pieces.
- D. Marc thought the name fit a make believe dog that was so many different colors.

Teacher feedback: (The correct answer is C.)

Score: (2 points – both (a) and (b) must be correct to earn 2 points, if (a) is correct and (b) is incorrect award 1 point, if (a) is incorrect, award 0 points.)

4. Marc ran from the park when he didn't want to be teased about Scraps.

What does his running show about Marc? How would you have acted if you had been Marc? Compare your actions with Marc's.

Use examples from the story and your own ideas to support your response.

Model Answer

When Marc ran from the park to keep from getting teased, I think he was smart. He was trying to avoid trouble rather than get into it. It might have shown he was a little afraid, too, since the story said he ran back to the building really fast. I also think his running home showed he was also proud of what he'd made and did not want it to be destroyed.

I think I would have done the same thing Marc did, except I probably wouldn't have made a dog from trash anyway. I would have made a drawing of a dog instead because I'm better at that. And no one would have been able to see a drawing of dog on a walk because I would put it in my pocket.

Award points for specific answers as shown below (for a total of 0–4 points).

Points	Concept Addressed	Feedback for Student Answers
2	The answer describes what Marc's running away shows about him (1 point) and uses examples from the story to support it (1 point).	Your answer should describe what Marc's running away shows about him and should use examples from the story to support it.
2	The answer describes how the student would have acted if he or she had been Marc (1 point), and compares the student's actions with Marc's (1 point). The answer uses the student's own ideas to support it.	Your answer should describe how you would have acted if you had been Marc, and should compare your actions with Marc's. Your answer should use your own ideas to support it.

Feedback for completely correct answer:

Your answer describes what Marc's running away shows about him. Your answer also describes how you would have acted if you had been Marc, and compares your actions with Marc's. Your answer uses examples from the story and your own ideas to support it.

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

Tips for Picking a Pet

(1) Are you thinking of getting a pet? Are you unsure about what kind to get? Becoming a pet owner is a serious matter. It means you must ask yourself some serious questions.

(2) Why do you want a pet? Is it because your best friend got a dog and you want one too? Did you see a TV show about a rat and think it would be cool to have one? Maybe you are interested in learning more about lizards and long to take care of one. Perhaps you want a bird for company and to love. If the last two statements sound like you, you have good reasons to want a pet.

(3) Next you need to think about how mature you are. Do you complain about having to do chores? Do you put off doing things because you are too tired or don't feel like it? Pets need someone they can count on! They can't fill their own water bowls or prepare their own food. And if they make a mess or need their bedding or litter changed, it's up to you to do it. Are you ready for that?

(4) Another thing to think about is your living conditions. Are pets allowed where you live? Do you have enough space for a pet? Will you have a large enough space for a pet as it grows? Some snakes and lizards need a small cage at first. But they can require a whole room to live in when they are fully grown.

(5) You must think about your family, too. Are any family members allergic to certain types of animals? Does your dad hate mice? Is your sister afraid of snakes? How old are the members of your family? If you have little brothers and sisters, they may not know how to treat animals. Some animals can't protect themselves from little hands that squeeze too hard. Other animals can cause harm when they defend themselves. If older people live with you, animals under foot could cause them to fall.

(6) What about the cost of providing for your pet? You must buy food and pay for your pet's vet care. Depending on the pet, it will need a leash, a bed, a cage, toys, and a license.

(7) So you've thought hard about bringing an animal into your home. Now what kind of animal should it be? Think about how you want to connect with your pet. Do you want one that likes to cuddle? Or would you prefer one you would only enjoy watching? If you want one that cuddles, a dog or a cat might be a good choice. If you're a watcher, you might want a turtle, fish, or lizard.

(8) You will need to do your homework about different animals too. Some animals like to live alone. Others do better living in pairs. How long does the animal you'd like live? Some pet birds live to be 75 to 100 years old. Tortoises can live to be 200! So pets such as these would have to be passed down from the pet owner to his or her children!

(9) It is hard making decisions about having a pet. But thinking things out ahead of time is important. Thinking ahead will make having a pet better for the owner and the lucky animal.

Choose answers to multiple choice questions. Type responses to questions that ask you to write a response. Be sure to save your work.

5. Answer the questions about the passage.

(a) Which statement **best** tells the main idea of the passage?

- A. Being a pet owner can be fun but is not always easy.
- B. Some pets are harder to take care of than others.
- C. It is best to think carefully before getting a pet.
- D. Tortoises live a long time and make the best pets.

Teacher feedback: (The correct answer is C.)

(b) Which sentence or sentences from the passage **best** support the answer in Part (a)?

- A. You must think about your family, too. Are any family members allergic to certain types of animals? (Paragraph 5)
- B. So pets such as these would have to be passed down from the pet owner to his or her children! (Paragraph 8)
- C. It's hard making decisions about having a pet. But thinking things out ahead of time is important. (Paragraph 9)
- D. You will need to do your homework about different animals too. Some animals like to live alone. (Paragraph 8)

Teacher feedback: (The correct answer is C.)

Score: (2 points – both (a) and (b) must be correct to earn 2 points, if (a) is correct and (b) is incorrect award 1 point, if (a) is incorrect, award 0 points.)

6. Reread Paragraph 3.

Which statement **best** tells why it is important for a pet owner to be mature?

- A. Children aren't strong enough to clean up after pets.
- B. People need to be responsible to care for a pet.
- C. Pets like older people better than younger people.
- D. Caring for a pet takes a lot of time and energy.

Teacher feedback: (The correct answer is B.)

Score: (1 point)

7. Reread Paragraph 8. In two sentences the author tells about the ages of birds and tortoises. In the next sentence the author says that these types of pets might have to be passed down to a pet owner’s children.

Why does the author include these three sentences? What point is the author making and why is it important?

Use examples from the text and your ideas to support your answer.

Model Answer

The author includes the first sentences to tell about the ages of birds and tortoises and to show that some pets have long, long lives. The author includes the next sentence to show one way a pet could be cared for if the owner could no longer do it.

The author is making the point that a person needs to think about how long a pet might live and how it will be cared for. This is important because the owner would have to be sure he or she makes a plan for the pet in case something happens and they could no longer take care of it.

Award points for specific answers as shown below (for a total of 0–3 points).

Points	Concept Addressed	Feedback for Student Answers
1	The answer explains why the author includes the three sentences in Paragraph 8 and uses examples from the text to support it.	Your answer should explain why the author includes the three sentences in Paragraph 8 and should use examples from the text to support it.
2	The answer explains what point the author is making (1 point) and why it is important (1 point). The answer uses the student’s own ideas to support it.	Your answer should explain what point the author is making and why it is important. Your answer should use your own ideas to support it.

Feedback for completely correct answer:

Your answer explains why the author includes the three sentences in Paragraph 8. Your answer also explains what point the author is making and why it is important. Your answer uses examples from the text and your ideas to support it.

8. Reread “Dumpster Dog” and “Tips for Picking a Pet.” Then answer the questions.

Think about Marc’s reasons for wanting a dog. What is one idea the story and the article have in common? What is one difference between the two?

Use information from each of the texts to support your answer.

Model Answer

In “Dumpster Dog” Marc talks about how having a dog would teach him to be more responsible because he’d have to care for it. He also talks about how he’d learn to care for something besides himself. The author makes a similar point in the article by asking a person to think about whether he or she is mature enough for a pet.

There is a difference between the points in the story and the article in that only dogs and cats are mentioned in the story. The article talks about many other kinds of animals such as snakes and lizards. The article discusses what could be involved in keeping those types of animals as pets.

Award points for specific answers as shown below (for a total of 0–2 points).

Points	Concept Addressed	Feedback for Student Answers
1	The answer provides one idea the story and article have in common and uses information from each of the texts to support it.	Your answer should provide one idea the story and article have in common and should use information from each of the texts to support it
1	The answer provides one difference between the story and the article and uses information from each of the texts to support it.	Your answer should provide one difference between the story and the article and should use information from each of the texts to support it.

Feedback for completely correct answer:

Your answer provides one idea the story and article have in common and one difference between them. Your answer uses information from each of the texts to support it.

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

My Crazy Pet-loving Life

(1) Hi Everybody,

(2) My name is Noah and I'm in third grade. This is my blog about my animals. I'm practicing to be a zookeeper when I grow up. It's fun to have pets and I am learning a lot. But it is also a bunch of work. If I miss some days writing this blog, I hope you'll understand.

(3) June 4: I have a cat, two fish, two white mice, two dwarf hamsters, a lizard, and one grumpy mom. She says if I get one more pet she's going to put me in a cage. I know she doesn't mean it because she would have to take care of all my pets if she did. And I see her snuggling with the cat all the time. But I think I'll wait to ask her about Jeremy's snake.

(4) June 5: This morning I heard Frosty and Snowball squeaking like crazy. I ran into my room and there was Jaws trying to push the lid off their cage. Lucky thing I found him or I might have had one full cat and two fewer mice. You'd think Jaws didn't have any other toys to play with. I set my dictionary on the lid to make sure Jaws couldn't get in. He was rubbing against my leg and wanting me to rub his belly. I can't stay mad at that guy when he purrs.

(5) June 6: Jeremy told me at swimming lessons that if I want Hiss, I'd better get her quickly. He has a waiting list. I've got to convince Mom! He's going to give me the cage, the frozen mice, and everything!

(6) June 8: It's 12:03 a.m. and I'm writing this on my tablet in the closet. Spongebob and Patrick are tearing it up in their hamster wheels as they do every night. I love those furry guys. But it was not a good day in the barnyard, as my brother has started calling my room. I was feeding Rango his daily cricket when I dropped the container. Crickets hopped everywhere. I thought I'd picked up all of them. But a little while ago some started having a concert under my bed. I'm used to the hamster wheels at night but not that. I was catching crickets when Dad yelled to knock off the racket and get to sleep. Good thing Mom didn't come in. She'd freak if she saw all those crickets on the loose.

(7) June 9: I got up this morning and my two guppies gave me a big surprise! Well, it was more like 24 surprises. I never knew baby guppies were so cute! I love watching them zip around. I wonder if I should give the fish two pinches of food now instead of one? I'd better look that up. I hadn't named the guppies yet but now I can call them A all the way to Z!

(8) June 13: I never did ask Mom about Hiss. Jeremy gave him to Nathan. I'm glad because I don't think I could have given Hiss enough attention. That's one thing you learn when you have pets. You have to think of them more than yourself.

Choose answers to multiple choice questions. Type responses to questions that ask you to write a response. Be sure to save your work.

9. Reread the blog entries for June 4, June 6, and June 13.

Give two reasons that Noah might have decided not to get Jeremy's snake.

Use information from the text and your own ideas to support your answer.

Model Answer

I think Noah did not want to upset his mother when he decided not to take Jeremy's snake. He talked about how she'd freak out if she saw crickets on the loose. He was probably imagining that she'd be even worse if the snake ever got loose.

I also think Noah decided he had enough pets to take care of already. He'd had the cat almost get his mice, the crickets escaping, and the guppies having babies. He was probably feeling like he had too much work to take care of without adding another animal to his zoo. He probably thought so because he said that he didn't think he'd be able to pay enough attention to Hiss.

Award points for specific answers as shown below (for a total of 0–2 points).

Points	Concept Addressed	Feedback for Student Answers
2	The answer gives two reasons that Noah might have decided not to get Jeremy's snake. The answer uses information from the text and the student's own ideas to support it. (1 point for each reason)	Your answer should give two reasons that Noah might have decided not to get Jeremy's snake. Your answer should use information from the text and your own ideas to support it.

Feedback for completely correct answer:

Your answer gives two reasons that Noah might have decided not to get Jeremy's snake. Your answer uses information from the text and your own ideas to support it.

10. Reread the June 8 entry. Then read these sentences:

Crickets hopped everywhere. I thought I'd picked up all of them. But a little while ago some started having a concert under my bed.

Which statement **best** tells the meaning of the underlined phrase in the sentence?

- A. The crickets were hopping.
- B. The crickets were chirping.
- C. The crickets were hiding.
- D. The crickets were eating.

Teacher feedback: (The correct answer is B.)

Score: (1 point)

11. Review the dates of the blog entries. Then answer the questions.

(a) Which statement **best** tells why the writer did not write for few days between the last two entries?

- A. The writer forgot to write the blog on those days.
- B. The writer was too busy to write on those days.
- C. The writer had nothing to write about on those days.
- D. The writer did not feel like writing on those days.

Teacher feedback: (The correct answer is B.)

(b) Which set of sentences from the passage **best** supports the answer in Part (a)?

- A. But it is also a bunch of work. If I miss some days writing this blog, I hope you'll understand. (Paragraph 2)
- B. I wonder if I should give the fish two pinches of food now instead of one? I'd better look that up. (Paragraph 7)
- C. I was catching crickets when Dad yelled to knock off the racket and get to sleep. Good thing Mom didn't come in. (Paragraph 6)
- D. That's one thing you learn when you have pets. You have to think of them more than yourself. (Paragraph 8)

Teacher feedback: (The correct answer is A.)

Score: (2 points – both (a) and (b) must be correct to earn 2 points, if (a) is correct and (b) is incorrect award 1 point, if (a) is incorrect, award 0 points.)

12. Reread “Dumpster Dog” and “My Crazy Pet-loving Life.”

How are the plots of the two passages alike? How are they different?

Use information from both texts and your own ideas to support your answer.

Model Answer

The plots of the two stories are alike in that in each one the events center on boys taking care of their pets. In “Dumpster Dog” Marc takes his imaginary dog, Scraps, on a walk. In “My Crazy Pet-loving Life” Noah feeds and gives affection to his pets.

The plots are different in that Marc can't really do much with Scraps since Scraps is not real. But Noah does a lot with his pets because he has so many.

Award points for specific answers as shown below (for a total of 0–2 points).

Points	Concept Addressed	Feedback for Student Answers
1	The answer describes how the plots of “Dumpster Dog” and “My Crazy Pet-loving Life” alike and uses information from both texts and the student’s own ideas to support it.	Your answer should describe how the plots of “Dumpster Dog” and “My Crazy Pet-loving Life” are alike and should use information from both texts and your own ideas to support it.
1	The answer describes how the plots of “Dumpster Dog” and “My Crazy Pet-loving Life” different and uses information from both texts and the student’s own ideas to support it.	Your answer should describe how the plots of “Dumpster Dog” and “My Crazy Pet-loving Life” are different and should use information from both texts and your own ideas to support it.

Feedback for completely correct answer:

Your answer describes how the plots of “Dumpster Dog” and “My Crazy Pet-loving Life” are alike and how they are different. Your answer uses information from both texts and your own ideas to support it.

13. Read this paragraph Marco wrote about his pet lizard:

I got Streak from a lady who raises lizards for pets. She told me lizards like to eat mealworms and crickets. Once I ran out of mealworms and tried to catch some crickets in the basement. But every time I thought I had caught one, it got away.

Which sentence is the **best** revision of the last sentence?

- A. But every time I thought I had catching one, it got away.
- B. But every time I thought I had caught one, it got away.
- C. But every time I thought I had caught one, it got away.
- D. But every time I thought I had caughten one, it got away.

Teacher feedback: (The correct answer is B.)

Score: (1 point)

14. Read this paragraph Chen wrote about her dogs:

Our dogs Bella and Rex were the parents of a litter of puppies. I couldn’t believe Shan was the last puppy to be adopted. He is so cute with his floppy ears and stub of a tail. His ears are soft as silk, and whenever he wags, his whole back end moves. He also has beautiful markings. Shan has his parents spots.

Which revision of the last sentence is punctuated correctly?

- A. Shan has his parent’s spots.
- B. Shan has his parents’ spots.
- C. Shan has his parents’s spots.
- D. Shan has his parent’ spots.

Teacher feedback: (The correct answer is B.)

Score: (1 point)

15. Read the paragraph Flora wrote about a pet parade:

Our town had a pet parade. People brought their pets in different clothes. One boy dressed his dog like a fireman and pulled him in a red wagon. A girl’s snake wore a coat made of bright socks sewn together. But the strangest was a lady’s white poodle hair-sprayed like a rainbow. The smile of each pet owner was apparent.

Which revision of the last sentence uses an abstract noun?

- A. The pet of each pet owner was apparent.
- B. The pride of each pet owner was apparent.
- C. The grin of each pet owner was apparent.
- D. The family of each pet owner was apparent.

Teacher feedback: (The correct answer is B.)

Score: (1 point)

16. Read these paragraphs Maggie wrote about a talk she had with her grandmother:

“Grandma,” I said, “how did you teach Peanut to fetch?”

“Well,” Grandma replied, “she really taught herself to do it. One day the neighbor’s dog came over and I played fetch with him. The next day Peanut started doing it, too.”

“I don’t have a neighbor dog that fetches,” I told Grandma. “How will I ever teach Foster to do it?”

Bring him over Grandma suggested and I bet Peanut can teach him to fetch in no time!

Which sentence is the **best** revision of the last sentence?

- A.** “Bring him over,” Grandma suggested, “and I bet Peanut can teach him to fetch in no time!”
- B.** “Bring him over” Grandma suggested, “and I bet Peanut can teach him to fetch in no time!”
- C.** “Bring him over, Grandma suggested,” and I bet Peanut can teach him to fetch in no time!”
- D.** “Bring him over, Grandma suggested” and I bet Peanut can teach him to fetch in no time!”

Teacher feedback: (The correct answer is A.)

Score: (1 point)

17. Read this paragraph Frank wrote about going to the pet store:

When my brother and I went to the pet store, we couldn't decide which animals were the more interesting. He liked the birds. But I thought the fish were cool. We finally decided the lizards and snakes were the best.

Which sentence is the **best** revision of the first sentence?

- A.** When my brother and I went to the pet store, we couldn't decide which animals were the best interesting.
- B.** When my brother and I went to the pet store, we couldn't decide which animals were the most interesting.
- C.** When my brother and I went to the pet store, we couldn't decide which animals were the moster interesting.
- D.** When my brother and I went to the pet store, we couldn't decide which animals were the interestingest.

Teacher feedback: (The correct answer is B.)

Score: (1 point)

18. You have read about people and their pets. You have also read about how to pick a pet and some of the problems in taking care of pets. Write an opinion essay of at least three paragraphs taking a stand about owning a pet. Think about the following questions when writing your essay:

- Is it important to have a pet? Why or why not?
- What would be some pros and cons about having a pet?
- Is being a pet a good thing for an animal? Why or why not?
- Is being a pet owner good for kids? Why or why not?

- (a)** Write an opinion essay of at least three paragraphs.
- (b)** Include an interesting introduction and state your opinion about owning a pet.
- (c)** Give at least three reasons to support your opinion and proof for those reasons, using examples from the readings and your own ideas.
- (d)** Organize your reasons in paragraphs.
- (e)** Be sure to use linking words and phrases to connect your reasons.
- (f)** End your essay with a strong conclusion.

Score: Use the rubric to evaluate the student's writing. Award points for each category as shown below (for a total of 12–20 points). Students who do not respond should be given a 0.

Teacher feedback: Provide feedback about the student's writing in each category.

Category	Level 3 (5 points)	Level 2 (4 points)	Level 1 (3 points)
Purpose and Content	The writing is entirely a persuasive or opinion essay taking a stand about pet ownership. It tells pros and cons of pet ownership for pets and children. The writing includes at least three reasons for the writer's opinions with evidence from the text to support the reasoning.	The writing is mostly a persuasive or opinion essay taking a stand about pet ownership. It tells some pros and cons of pet ownership for pets and children. The writing includes at least two reasons for the writer's opinions with some evidence from the text to support the reasoning.	The writing may not be a persuasive or opinion essay about pet ownership. It may not state the pros and cons of pet ownership. It may not state opinions or include reasoning or evidence from the text.
Structure and Organization	The writing is at least three paragraphs long. It takes the form of a persuasive or opinion essay and follows that form consistently. There is an interesting introduction stating an opinion. There are paragraphs with supporting reasons for that opinion. Each paragraph has a clear topic sentence, and each paragraph is about a discrete idea or reason. Each reason is supported with details and evidence. All of the sentences relate to the point being made. There is no tangential information. There are many linking words and phrases to connect the reasoning in the writing. There is a strong conclusion.	The writing is at least two paragraphs long and mostly takes the form of a persuasive or opinion essay. There are separate paragraphs with supporting reasons for the opinion. There is an introduction stating an opinion. There are some linking words and phrases to connect the reasoning in the writing. There is a conclusion.	The writing may be fewer than two paragraphs long or it may not take the form of a persuasive or opinion essay. There may be no separation of reasons or ideas into paragraphs. There may be no linking words and phrases to connect the reasoning in the writing. There may be no conclusion.
Language and Word Choice	The writing contains many strong adjectives, concrete nouns, and vivid verbs to help convey information. The writing may have some use of figurative language to help form a picture in the reader's mind or include definitions. The language is clear and accurate and there is no ambiguity.	The writing uses some adjectives, concrete nouns, and vivid verbs. The writing is mostly clear and accurate, but there may be some ambiguity or the use of soft words such as "stuff" to describe concrete ideas or objects.	The writing may not use adjectives, concrete nouns, or vivid verbs. The writing may not be clear and accurate. There is frequent ambiguity and the use of soft words such as "stuff" to describe concrete ideas or objects.

Category	Level 3 (5 points)	Level 2 (4 points)	Level 1 (3 points)
Grammar, Usage, and Mechanics	The writing is in standard English. The writing has no errors in grammar, usage, or mechanics. The writing has no errors in punctuation or spelling.	The writing is mostly in standard English. The writing may contain some errors in grammar, usage, or mechanics. The writing may contain some errors in punctuation or spelling. The errors do not interfere with the reader's understanding.	The writing may not be in standard English. The writing may contain many errors in grammar, usage, or mechanics. The writing may contain many errors in punctuation or spelling. The errors may make it difficult to follow or understand the writing.