



NeSA Text Dependent Analysis (TDA)

2015 Sampler Passage

Grade 6

Passage: A Highway of Water

Scoring Guide

Prompt: Read the definition below.

phenomenon: an unusual or significant fact or event

In the last sentence of “A Highway of Water,” the author claims the Panama Canal is a phenomenon. Analyze how the author support this claim throughout the passage. Write a well-organized response using specific evidence from the passage to support your answer.

Sample A

The author of “Highway of Water claims that the Panama Canal is a phenomenon. I think the author is correct because the canal is both unusual and significant. First the canal is unusual because it was a new route to connect New York and California. Before the canal was built the travelers had to cross the prairie land, sail and walk across Panama by foot, or sail all the way around the tip of South America. The canal was like crossing Panama but without having to walk. Second, the canal was significant because it was a huge project to complete. France tried to build the canal but their workers got sick and some even died. It also took lots of money. Because of all these problems France gave up and the United States had to take over. Third the canal was also significant because it used a system of locks so the ships could travel between the two oceans and each lock contained millions of gallons of water! Fourth, the canal is significant because so many ships use it, “approximately 14,000 ships make the 50 mile trip through the canal each year.” That is a lot of ships that can now take a short cut and save a lot of time! In conclusion, the author was correct in calling the Panama Canal a phenomenon because it was both unusual and significant.

Sample A Annotation

Score: 3

This response demonstrates effective analysis of text, use of evidence, and writing skills. The response addresses all parts of the task by analyzing how the author supports the claim that the Panama Canal is a phenomenon. Specific, relevant evidence is integrated into the analysis. The response is focused on the idea that the canal was both unusual and significant. Clear use of paraphrasing and quoting is evident. Use of precise word choice and content specific vocabulary from the text is evident. Errors in conventions do not interfere with meaning.

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Sample B

The author states the Panama Canal is a phenomenon that is an unusual or significant fact or event. It is a phenomenon because before it was built sailing by ship from ocean to ocean was a dangerous 15000 mile journey that took months. After it was built, the route was 8000 miles shorter. It saved time, money and even lives which is always significant. But building a canal was not easy. It started with failure but after a lot of work it ended in success.

Plans to build a canal started in 1850 when the United States and Great Britain planned to build a canal through the Central American Republic of Nicaragua. “The project didn’t even make it beyond the planning stages”. That is pretty unusual.

Next, in 1879 the French decided to build a canal in Panama which was only 50 miles wide at its narrowest part. They hired an experienced builder who had built the Suez Canal in Egypt but they experienced problems they were not able to overcome such as tropical diseases killing the majority of the workers, and temperatures as high as 130 degrees. The French ran out of money for the canal and in 1899 abandoned the project. All these details are very unusual!

Finally in November 1904 the United States began to finish the canal. It wasn’t easy because before they started they needed to sign a treaty between the United States and Panama, “this deal was viewed as a major foreign policy achievement at the time”. The United States learned from the problems the French had and found ways to “avoid the problems that caused France to abandon the project”. Some of the things they did was keep the workers healthy by building hospitals and water and sewage systems. Their hard work all paid off on September 26, 1913 when an old tugboat went through the canal through a system of locks and gates, another huge significant achievement.

Overall, the Panama Canal is a phenomenon because it is unusual and significant. It created a new “highway of water” through Panama which is significant. It all took place through the extraordinary (unusual) efforts of many countries involved in the planning and building of the canal. It also was a major foreign policy achievement and it changed how ships travel forever! That is very significant!

Sample B Annotation

Score: 4

This response demonstrates exemplary analysis of text, use of evidence, and writing skills. The response addresses all parts of the task, thoroughly analyzing the author’s claim that the Panama Canal is a phenomenon by thoroughly addressing the ideas from the text. The response provides relevant and accurate evidence to thoroughly support the idea that building the canal was an unusual and significant event. The response is well-focused and demonstrates an appropriate organizational pattern. The response demonstrates skillful use of paraphrases and quotes from the text. Precise word choices and content-specific vocabulary from the text are evident.

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Sample C

The Panama canal is phenomenon because before it was built it was hard to travel the long distance from the east coast to the west coast and they had to find a way to get there in less time.

The idea was to build a canal to move people and goods from place to place much quicker. A canal is a human-made waterway.

The first attempt to build the canal was France but they couldn't do it. Then the United States decided to finish the canal after France had started it. They built the canal and now in modern times 14000 ships make the 50 mile trip through the canal each year which is shorter than going all the way around.

Sample C Annotation

Score: 2

This response demonstrates partially effective analysis of text, use of evidence, and writing skills. The response partially addresses the task of analyzing how the author supports the claim that the Panama Canal is a phenomenon and provides a partial analysis of explicit ideas from the text. The response includes a partially effective introduction, body, and conclusion. The response demonstrates partially effective use of paraphrases and quotes. Errors in conventions may interfere with meaning.

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Sample D

The Panama Canal is a phenomenon. It is unusual because there are not alot of canals in the world. It is the only one I have heard of that connects 2 oceans. It connects the Atlantic and pacific oceans. It took a long time to build and it is really long. It makes the trip to california shorter. its a phenominal canal.

Sample D Annotation

Score: 1

This response demonstrates minimal analysis of text, use of evidence, and writing skills. The response minimally addresses the task, demonstrating a minimal understanding of the text and provides little evidence from the passage to support ideas. The response demonstrates minimal use of paraphrase or quotes. This brief response does not demonstrate evidence of effective writing skills.

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Sample E

I think that the author clarifies that the panama canal is a phenomenon because he/she explained that the people were very happy when it was finished he/she explained in the text. On September 26, 1919, an old tugboat was the first ship through the canal.

Thousands of people watched and cheered. The locks worked perfectly. this explains that .in the diagram they show pictures on how to locks work

the people were excited when the canal was finally build

One other reason why the panama canal was a phenomenon it would save people lots of time traveling

With a canal in Panama, the trip from New York to California would be about 8,000 miles shorter than sailing around South America. Travel time could be three months instead of eight months.

Th panama canal was on of the biggest time save saving over 5 months of travel time which could save food water and lives one of the most used canal ever in modern times, approximately 14,000 ships make the 50-mile trip through the canal each year.

Sample E Annotation

Score: 2

This response demonstrates partially effective analysis of text, use of evidence, and writing skills. The response addresses some parts of the task and demonstrates a partial understanding of the text. The response partially analyzes text by addressing explicit ideas from the text. The response partially integrates evidence from the text by using some details, examples, and quotes. The evidence provided partially supports the claim that "the author clarifies that the panama canal is a phenomenon." The response is partially focused and includes a partially effective introduction and body and lacks a clear conclusion. Minimal use of paraphrasing and quotes is evident. Errors in conventions may interfere with meaning.

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Sample F

The Panama Canal is important in many ways. Three ways are that it saves time, there are locks and gates, and the deal was viewed as a major foreign policy.

First, the Panama Canal saves a lot of time. If you want to get to California from New York and wanted to go on boat you would probably choose the Panama Canal instead of going around South America. It takes eight months to go around South America and it only takes three months to go through the Panama Canal. That is a five month difference and five months is a lot of time. Another way it saves time is that you have a less storms. With less time on the trip there is a less chance of having so many storms. With less storms that can save many lives. Since you don't have to go around South America the route is a lot shorter. There is 5000 miles take off the trip because of the Panama Canal.

Second, the Panama Canal has locks and gates. When boats and ships go through the canal they have to go through three sets of gates . Each gate hold millions of gallons of water. So when ships go through each gate water gets pumped either in or out of the gate so that the water level is even with the next one. What that does is raises or lowers the ships.

Lastly, the Panama Canal's deal was viewed as a major foriegn policy. The United States paid France \$40 million for the completed work and abandoned equipment. Then a treaty between the U.S. and Panama signed paying Panama \$10 million for a 10-mile wide strip of land. The treaty also guaranteed \$250,000 to Panama each year for the use of land and ensured its independence.

I think that the Panama Canal is very important in many ways and that we are extremely lucky to be able to use some thing like that.

Sample F Annotation

Score: 3

This response demonstrates effective analysis of text, use of evidence, and writing skills. The response addresses the task and demonstrates understanding of the text by analyzing explicit and implicit ideas from the text. Specific evidence from the text is integrated through the use of details and examples. Relevant and accurate evidence from the text supports the claim that “the Panama Canal is important in many ways.” The response is focused and includes a clear introduction, body, and conclusion. Partially effective use of paraphrases and quotes is evident. Errors in conventions do not interfere with meaning.

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Sample G

In the story A Highway of Water, is about making a Canal for a better and safer route to west of the U.S. In the beginning of the story travelers wanted find an easy route to get to the West Coast of the United States. They had three choices, go by wagon, go by foot, or go by sailboat. The travelers chose sailboat.

Later in the story the French people decide to make a canal for the sailboat to cross on. But the hardships of having to build the canal were tough for the French builders. Some of them caught bad diseases and most ended up dying. So the French abandoned the project.

Much further in the story a couple years later the U.S took over the project of the canal. They didn't want to go through the same diseases as the French did, so they had an engineer build a hospital and have fresh clean water for workers. This helped keep the workers healthy and focused.

At the end of the story when the canal was done over about 14,000 ships had gone through the Panama canal. Thanks to the panama canal, it had saved people lives and ships. All of this adds up to the main idea, they took a risk to save peoples lives to get across from one country to another.

Sample G Annotation

Score: 2

This response demonstrates partially effective analysis of text, use of evidence, and writing skills. The response addresses some parts of the task to demonstrate partial understanding of the text. This summary of the text partially addresses explicit and implicit ideas from the text. Some of the evidence provided from the text is not accurate. Evidence from the text is partially integrated into the analysis. The response is partially focused and includes a partially effective introduction/thesis, body, and conclusion. Partial evidence of an organizational pattern suited to the purpose is demonstrated as the response is a summary using details that relate to the prompt. Use of paraphrasing is evident. Precise word choice and vocabulary from the text are occasionally used. Some errors in conventions interfere with meaning.

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Sample H

Just before that in the last paragraph it was saying that, quote, “time, money, and possibly even lives have been saved as ships use the shorter route from ocean to ocean provided by the canal. It also says that it only takes 10 to 12 hours to get from one ocean to the other when without it the trip could take months. Lastly it said that the locks worked perfectly which in other words means that the locks were a success. Those are just a few ways that the author told the reader that the Panama Canal is a phenomenon.

Sample H Annotation

Score: 1

This response demonstrates minimal analysis of text, use of evidence, and writing skills. This response addresses some parts of the task to demonstrate partial understanding of the text. The text is partially analyzed through addressing explicit and implicit ideas from the text. Little evidence is provided to support the claim that the Panama Canal is a phenomenon. Evidence from the text is minimally integrated through the use of very few examples, details, and quotes. The response is minimally focused and lacks an introduction/thesis. The body, conclusion, and transitions are partially effective. Minimal use of paraphrasing and quoting is evident. Use of precise word choice and vocabulary from the text is minimal. Errors in conventions do not interfere with meaning.

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Sample I

“The Panama Canal, a highway of water, is a phenomenon.” Is what the author states in the story and I would have to agree to him myself. It is a phenomenon because it has helped people over the ages to get to other countries.

One reason for why its a phenomenon is because it helps get across the sea faster. One example is that it would take people 15,000 miles from New York to California. It is now 8,000 miles shorter because of the Panama Canal.

Another Reason is that it helps ships out when they are sailing in the ocean. It levels out the ocean waters so a ship can sail right on through. It would have about 2-3 locks where one would open or close. Water would fill up your section and would raise the water so you can go through.

The last reason is that The U.S. and France had agreed that \$250,000 would go to the Panama Canal every year so that it can stay here for many years to come.

The Panama Canal is a phenoomenon to me thats for sure but maybe not to you. I just wish that the Panama Canal will last forever.

Sample I Annotation

Score: 2

This response demonstrates partially effective analysis of text, use of evidence, and writing skills. The response addresses some parts of the task to demonstrate partial understanding of the text. The response partially analyzes the text by addressing some explicit ideas from the text. Evidence from the text is partially integrated through the use of details and examples. Some relevant and accurate information is provided to partially support the claim that the Panama Canal is a phenomenon. The response is partially focused and includes a partially effective introduction/thesis, body, and conclusion. Errors in conventions may interfere with meaning.

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Sample J

There are many reasons why he Panama Canal isa phenomenon. One reason is, it would take only three months to travel from New York to California instead of eight. Severe weather, which is common at the tip of South American where the two oceans meet, could add as much as five extra months to the trip. The Canal helped people avoid this problem. The author states that in modern times, approximately 14,000 ships make the 50-mile trip through the canal each year. On average, the trip through the canal takes a ships 8 to 10 hours.

Time money and lives have been saved. For example, in the last paragraph the author states, Time, money, and possibly even lives have been saved as ships use the shorter route from ocean to ocean provided by the canal.

These are the reasons why the Panama Canal is a phenomenon.

Sample J Annotation

Score: 2

This response demonstrates partially effective analysis of text, use of evidence, and writing skills. The response addresses some parts of the task to demonstrate partial understanding of the text. The response partially analyzes text by addressing explicit ideas from the text. Some relevant and accurate evidence is provided through use of details and examples to support the claim that the Panama Canal is a phenomenon. The response is partially focused and includes a partially effective introduction, body, and conclusion. Minimal use of paraphrasing and quoting are evident. Some errors in conventions interfere with meaning.