

Grade 8 / Constructed Response Student Samples

➔ ARGUMENTATIVE PERFORMANCE TASK

Item Prompt ITEM #2695	Source #4 describes how some people want to eliminate the penny from the United States' economy. Explain how the information in Source #2 adds to the reader's understanding of the potential effects of eliminating pennies in the United States. Give two details from Source #2 to support your explanation.
Claim, Target, and Standards	Smarter Balanced Claim and Target: Claim 4: Research, Target 2. ANALYZE/INTEGRATE INFORMATION: Analyze information within and among sources of information (print and non-print texts, data sets, conducting procedures, etc.). Focus Standards for Target 2: RI-1, RI-6, RI-8, RI-9; RH- and RST-1, 2, and 7–9; W-8, W-9; WHST-8, WHST-9 DOK: 4
Key Elements	Source #2 (Is the Penny Worth It?) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The U.S. Department of Defense stopped using the penny on foreign military bases over 30 years ago because pennies are "too heavy and are not cost effective to ship."• The foreign military bases use a pricing system that rounds transactions to the nearest 5-cents, and that rounding system seems to work well.• Some fear that rounding will cost more for customers because of rising prices. Mark Weller says the "rounding tax" will cost consumers \$600 million per year.• Dr. Whaples study says that over \$700 million is wasted per year in the United States through the time it takes retail clerks and customers to count pennies.• Many argue that price rounding cannot be done fairly, so finding a cheaper way to make pennies is a better option for cutting the costs of the penny. One option for cutting costs is by using steel to make pennies like was done during World War II.



Response is an evidence-based explanation that provides two pieces of evidence from Source #2 that support this idea and that explains how each example supports the idea.

SAMPLE RESPONSE

The information in Source #2 helps add to the reader’s understanding of the effects of eliminating the penny as it elaborates on the different arguments concerning the penny and provides evidence from new sources. One example is how the article cites the Department of Defense as a source, informing the reader about how “for over 30 years, pennies haven’t been used on foreign military bases. Pennies are ‘too heavy and are not cost-effective to ship’” (Mancuso). This illustrates how Source #2 gives more information as it is the only source to show how the Department of Defense has benefited from eliminating the penny, which may give us hints about how the rest of the country will benefit, too. Another example is how it explains that “eliminating the penny will save time too...time saved is even more valuable than eliminating a potential impact on rounding prices” (Mancuso). Again, this source explains the benefits time wise of removing the penny. This all shows how Source #2 provides the reader with additional information involving eliminating the penny.

RATIONALE

This response earned a score of 2 because it includes two pieces of evidence from Source #2, as well as elaboration on each piece of evidence. The student demonstrates an understanding of the writing task and provides a complete response that includes one of the key elements, “too heavy and are not cost effective to ship” as well as another relevant quotation that supports the student’s explanation.



Response is an evidence-based explanation that provides two pieces of evidence from Source #2 that support this idea but doesn't explain how each example supports the idea.

OR

Response is an evidence-based explanation that provides only one piece of evidence from Source #2 that supports this idea and that explains how that example supports the idea.

SAMPLE RESPONSE

The claim in source 4 is "Because making money costs money." In source 2 it explains some effects of removing the penny. One of these effects are prices would be rounded up or down so the change would not need pennies. This would impact the prices and costs of things. Retail would choose to round up more often to earn more money so you will pay a bit more for every day things.

RATIONALE

This response provides effective elaboration and shows evidence of original ideas. However, it only does so for one paraphrased piece of evidence: "One of these effects are prices would be rounded up or down." To raise the score to a 2, the student would need to add an additional piece of evidence from one of the sources and elaborate upon it.



Response is an explanation that is incorrect, irrelevant, insufficient, or blank.

SAMPLE RESPONSE

- For over 30 years, pennies haven't been used on foreign military bases.
- Despite its cultural influences the penny is currently under attack.

RATIONALE

This response merely enumerates two quotations from the sources, without including proper citation. The second detail is from Source #4. The response, then, includes only one piece of evidence from Source #2 without explanation of how this evidence supports the idea and is therefore insufficient to the task.

Grade 8 / Constructed Response Student Samples

➔ ARGUMENTATIVE PERFORMANCE TASK

Item Prompt ITEM #2696	All of the sources provide information about the penny. Which source would most likely be relevant to students researching the ways to reduce the cost of producing the penny? Justify your answer and support it with two pieces of information from the sources.
Claim, Target, and Standards	Smarter Balanced Claim and Target: Claim 4: Research, Target 3. EVALUATE INFORMATION/SOURCES: Use reasoning, evaluation, and evidence to assess the credibility and accuracy of each source in order to gather and select information to support analysis, reflection, and research. Focus Standards for Target 3: W-8; WHST-8 DOK: 4
Key Elements	Source #1 (Penny Wise, or 2.4 Cents Foolish?) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Congress has instructed the US Mint to study ways to make the penny more cheaply.• Congress changed the composition of the penny in 1982 to be more zinc and less copper.• Steel was used to make pennies during World War II.• A nickel costs more than 11 cents to produce and distribute.



Response is an evidence-based explanation that correctly identifies the most relevant source AND includes two pieces of evidence from that source that support this evaluation and that explains why each piece of evidence supports the idea that it is the most relevant source.

SAMPLE RESPONSE

Source #1 would probably be the most effective source, as it gives a lot of information on the composition of the coins and the cost of their production. One example is how the source states “...pennies were 95 percent copper and 5 percent zinc...pennies manufactured since have been copper-plated zinc, with zinc making up 97.5 percent of the coin and copper only 2.5 percent. Steel, which was used in pennies in World War II, could be substituted next” (Sommer). This shows how the article provides ample information regarding the metal composition of pennies, and even gives possible substitutes to the materials used in penny manufacturing. Another excerpt from the text is when it talks about how “in the United States, the mint says, each zinc and copper coin costs 2.41 cents to produce and distribute...’From the standpoint of economics, that’s just a total waste of money,’ Mr. Velde says” (Sommer). This illustrates how the article also talks about the costs of producing pennies, fundamental information if you were researching how to reduce the cost of pennies.

RATIONALE

Response is an evidence-based explanation that correctly identifies the most relevant source AND includes two pieces of evidence from that source that support the claim. The writer also explains why each piece of evidence supports the idea of Source # 1 being the most relevant source.



Response is an evidence-based explanation that correctly identifies the most relevant source AND includes one piece of evidence from that source that support this evaluation and that explains why the piece of evidence supports the idea that it is the most relevant source.

or

Response is an evidence-based explanation that correctly identifies the most relevant source AND includes two pieces of evidence from that source that support this evaluation but does not explain why each piece of evidence supports the idea that it is the most relevant source.

or

Response is an evidence-based explanation that does not identify a source or correctly identify the most relevant source but includes two pieces of evidence from the correct source and that explains why each piece of evidence supports the idea that it is the most relevant source.

SAMPLE RESPONSE

The source that will most likely be relevant to students researching the ways to reduce the cost of producing pennies, I would say source one because for example in source one it said, "In the United States, the mint says, each zinc and copper coin costs 2.41 cents to produce and distribute." (Source 1, Sommer) This tells us that to make a penny it costs 2.41 cents to make. Another example why source one best describes information about penny is because in source one it said, " The United States government lost about that is, taxpayers lost \$60.2 million on the production and distribution of pnnies in 2011 fiscal year, the mint's budget shows, and the losses have been mounting: \$27.4... (Source 1, Sommer) This tells us that pennies are a little expensive to make but they only cost a little amount. This is important because we should think bigger these days.

RATIONALE

This response is an evidence-based explanation that correctly identifies the source and includes one piece of relevant evidence and a short explanation of why that evidence is relevant. The second piece of evidence is also from Source #1, but it does not relate well to the idea of researching ways to reduce the cost of the penny. The explanation following the second piece of evidence is vague. With a stronger explanation that clearly tied the second piece of evidence to the relevance of the source, this paper could have received a score of 2, but the combination of the somewhat irrelevant evidence and the weak explanation earns this paper a score point of 1.



Response is an explanation that is incorrect, irrelevant, insufficient, or blank.

SAMPLE RESPONSE

- Washington Middle School hosted its annual Penny Drive for Charity.
- Students from every grade brought in bags and jars of pennies, and, with everyone’s assistance, they raised \$3,000 in just one week.

RATIONALE

The student did not state which source would be most likely to be relevant to researching the ways to reduce the cost of the penny. While the student did provide two pieces of information, they were irrelevant to the question being asked and were lifted directly out of one of the articles.