

Grade 8 / Case Study 2

→ ELA * SMARTER BALANCED PERFORMANCE TASK

Research Question 1 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.

Student Response ITEM #2695

In source #2, the author explains that counting pennies as a retail clerk could actually add up to \$700 million in wages. The author also explains that rounding taxes could cost \$600 million per year for consumers. This adds to the reader's understanding that there are both pros and cons.

Analysis ITEM #2695

The student receives a score of 1 on this response. This is an evidence-based response that provides two pieces of evidence from Source #2, but the student fails to explain how each example supports the idea. The amount of explanation required may have been confusing for the student since the prompt does not explicitly ask for elaboration on the two details. Thus, it is important that all students are taught that in any evidence-based writing, all evidence requires an explanation. Also, rather than beginning the response with an explanation of how the information adds to the reader's understanding, the explanation is added after the evidence is stated. Beginning with an explanation would have clarified the response.

The student demonstrates the ability to accurately recognize relevant evidence related to the question. The score could be improved to a 2 by writing a clearer explanation and elaborating in more detail how each piece of evidence supports the overall idea.

<p>Research Question 2 ITEM #2696</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Student Response ITEM #2696</p>	<p>Source #1 would probably be the most relevant source because it provides the most statistics about about making pennies and suggests that we have lowered the production costs of pennies before, why not do it again?</p>
<p>Analysis ITEM #2696</p>	<p>The student receives a score of 1 on this response. The student identifies the correct source. However, the student only includes one key element as a clear example, while the other example is vague. The student does not effectively explain why the evidence supports the idea.</p> <p>The student needs to be more specific in providing detailed evidence and needs to include an explanation of the evidence for an improved score.</p>

Research
Question 3

ITEM #2697

Look at the claims in the table. Decide if the information in Source #3, Source #4, both sources, or neither source supports each claim. Put an X in the box that identifies the source that supports each claim. There will be only one box selected for each claim.

Student
Response

ITEM #2697

KEY

X = student response

✓ = correct response

	SOURCE #3 Give a Penny—Save the Day!	SOURCE #4 The Ever-Changing Penny	Both	Neither
The penny has more value than what it can buy.		X	✓	
Rounding price totals will cause an increase in prices.		X		✓
The low value of a penny is a good thing.	✓		X	
Changing the metals in the penny is a possible solution for people who want to keep the penny.		X ✓		

Analysis

ITEM #2697

The student receives a score of 0 for this response. The student is able to answer only one of the cells correctly, identifying Source #4: The Ever-Changing Penny as supporting the claim that “Changing the metals in the penny is a possible solution for people who want to keep the penny.” It appears that the student needs continued instruction and practice in identifying details that effectively support a claim and also in being able to closely read and review sources in order to locate relevant details within specific sources.

Full Write * ITEM #2698

Full Write –
Student
Response
ITEM #2698

The production of pennies has been a largely discussed topic for the past few years. The country is trying to decide whether or not the penny is worth producing anymore. The production cost of pennies is up to twice it's worth but so are many other coins. Is it really worth getting rid of if all it will do is lower a few production costs? The United States should continue to produce pennies because there is much more worth to pennies than you would think.

Washington Middle School recently hosted an annual Penny Drive for charity. With everyone's assistance, they were able to raise \$3000 in one week. Many people do not see the value in pennies, but it clearly adds up. Things wouldn't have been the same at WMS if it had been a quarter or a dime, just because they have more value.

Washington Middle School isn't the only place that found out something new about the penny. Inflation could be a new problem on the rise. Without the penny, retailers will have to either round up or down on their prices, and it will most likely be up, claims Mark Weller, Americans for Common Cents spokesperson. This isn't the only expense that losing the penny will cost us. Mark Weller also claims that "rounding tax" will cost us \$600 million per year.

Is getting rid of the penny really worth all the trouble we will have to go through? Rounding prices cannot be done fairly, so it would simple be easier to find a way to lower production costs. We have done it before, surely we can do it again. Another reason the penny is necessary to keep is because it is actually worth so much more than you think. Ask the kids at Washington Middle School. They have clearly been able to put the penny to good use. The United States should continue to produce pennies because eliminating pennies will cost the nation so much more to get rid of them than to keep them.

Analysis of Full Write

ITEM #2698

Organization and Purpose: Score 3

Based on the Organization and Purpose rubric, the student receives a score of 3. The student has a strong introduction to the topic in which the claim is introduced, clearly communicated, and strongly maintained for the purpose, audience and task. The student also concludes the piece of writing in an effective way. The student uses some transitions, including one particularly effective example in which the student discusses a school fundraiser in paragraph two, then begins paragraph three with the following transition: "Washington Middle School isn't the only place that found out something about the penny." However, the use of transitional strategies could have been more effectively used to clarify differences between ideas. While the student also demonstrates a logical progression of ideas from beginning to end, the connections between ideas are only adequate in nature and do not always flow smoothly. Opposing arguments are acknowledged throughout the essay, but not always in an effective order. The counterclaim is insufficient because it consists of one statement that is not supported by evidence from the sources: "Many people do not see the value in pennies, but it clearly adds up."

Evidence and Elaboration: Score 3

Based on the Evidence and Elaboration rubric, this student receives a score of 3. The student effectively integrates summarized evidence from the sources, but only references one source directly. It is often difficult to determine the difference between evidence and elaboration. The style of the writer is evident in the use of voice throughout the piece, and the student demonstrates adequate use of elaborative techniques. The vocabulary is clearly appropriate for the audience and purpose.

Conventions: Score 2

The student receives a score of 2 in the area of Conventions. The writer demonstrates solid use of correct sentence formation, punctuation, capitalization, grammar, and spelling, and the ratio of mistakes to the overall writing is low.

Overview of Student's Performance

Throughout the performance task, the student demonstrates the ability to identify relevant evidence. The student also shows an adequate command of conventions. However, in all elements of the task the student struggles to maintain a logical and coherent flow of integrated ideas that include adequate elaboration. This makes the student's performance on the task as a whole adequate rather than effective.

The intention of the research questions is to provide scaffolding leading into the full write. In this case, the student does indeed use some information from the research questions in the full write. For example the student's point in Research Question 1 that "rounding taxes could cost \$600 million per year for consumers" is echoed in the full write as support for the student's claim: "Mark Weller also claims that 'rounding tax' will cost us \$600 million per year." Likewise, the student's response to Research Question 2 that lowering production costs is a valid means to keeping the penny without losing so much money comes up again in the conclusion to the full write.

Next Steps

The student shows room for growth in using transitions effectively, in fully addressing the opposing argument, in using source references correctly, and in including sufficient elaboration.

The student needs to incorporate more effective transition techniques in order to organize the piece in a clearer, more structured frame. There are a lot of solid ideas presented, but they do not always flow seamlessly together. With scaffolding to structure the organization into a clearer sequence with stronger transitions to delineate between ideas, the writer would more effectively reach the audience. Since the student does use effective transitions sometimes, there is a great starting point. A next step may be to work with the student to analyze mentor texts (written by adult authors or more skilled peers) that contain effective and sophisticated transitions throughout, identify those transitions and explaining how they help create text cohesion, and revise work to include more effective transitions.

The student requires explicit instruction and practice in developing an opposing argument that includes evidence and elaboration before the response returns to the original argument. One next step may be to brainstorm opposing arguments and then write fully developed paragraphs convincing others of those opposing arguments. This practice would hopefully help the student see the difference between fully addressing the counterclaim and simply acknowledging it.

The response needs to include references to the sources from which the student uses ideas. This student shows a strong ability to synthesize and present information, does not cite the source of that information. The student needs a framework for referencing source material correctly by title or source number (such as MLA or AP). The student also needs access to models of correct references as well as practice citing sources within text.

The student needs focused instruction on how to analyze the meaning of evidence to clarify how the evidence supports the claim in a way that makes the student's own ideas clear to the reader. Also, being able to home in on more elaborative techniques of relating the topic to personal knowledge and/or experience would also help the student write an argument that is effective rather than adequate. The student needs to know how to explain the relevance of each piece of evidence to the argument using original language. One possible next step would be to analyze elaborative techniques used by more proficient writers, first highlighting evidence from source material in one color and the author's elaboration on that evidence in another color. That way, the student can see the often sophisticated way in which different authors elaborate on their ideas, blending source evidence with explicative descriptions and examples, all the while maintaining text cohesion. The student may then benefit from co-constructing a more well-elaborated argument with peers or a teacher, followed by independent practice.