

The Day

Examples of How MY Access Evaluates Essays

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The following are examples of two essays -- one written by a high school student, the other written by Jenna Cho, a staff writer at The Day. Harry Barfoot, vice president of Vantage Learning, provided the MY Access! data.

“After School Job”

You are trying to decide whether to take an after-school job during the school year. The money would be helpful, but you would have to give up something else to find time to work. Write a letter to your parent(s) persuading them that you should or should not get a job during high school.

The assessments of Jenna Cho's essay in pdf format:

[Assessment of focus in Jenna Cho's essay](#)

[Overall assessment of Jenna Cho's essay](#)

The student's essay:

Dear Mom and Dad,

I think having a job after school would be hard for me. I need to keep my school grades up and concentrate on that for a while before I can start taking on more responsibilities. For example, if I had to be at my job at 4:00 pm, I might not finish my homework and finish studying by then, but I would have to go to work anyway and could not be late. I might get back from my job late at night and not be able to complete my homework, or I might have to stay up even later to finish it. Therefore my school grades would suffer. I think school should come first, and I should get used to my new high school before making another commitment. When I get older, or more settled in at my new school I will get a job.

Another problem would be I wouldn't have any transportation to go to work unless I took the bus, or got a ride with one of my friends or someone who worked there with me. If I took the bus as my transportation, it might be hard to find one that fits my schedule and gets me there on time for my job. For example, the bus could arrive at the bus stop before my job, but it might have to

make more stops before it arrives at the bus stop near my job and that could make me late. Getting home from my job would be another problem, because taking the bus at night alone could be risky. I could try to get a ride with one of my friends, but they have things to do too, and I can't rely on them to drive me all the time. Plus, most of my friends can't drive yet either. I could ask someone that works at the job with me, but I probably wouldn't know anyone working at my workplace yet and therefore couldn't ask them to take me to and from work. Either one of you could take me to work, but that might not work out all of the time because you have work too and can't always stop your busy schedule to drive me to my job.

If I got a job, I would have to make some sacrifices. I would have to give up my time that I use for relaxing and having fun to get money. Most likely, my social life would suffer because I wouldn't get to go out on weeknights because I would be at my job, or would need to do homework and study. Being with my friends is really important to me and it would be hard for me to let go of that. I know I would still get to be with them sometimes, just not as much. Some other sacrifices would be I wouldn't have as much free time as I have now. I like to go on the computer and read books, take care of my pets, and do things outside. If I had a job, I wouldn't get to do all or most of those things that I enjoy. On the weekends I wouldn't get to sleep in or go out with my friends because I would be at my job, doing homework and studying, chores around the house, or maybe even sleeping because I wouldn't get much as much rest if I had a job during the week.

I understand that in the summer I should get a job to help pay for some of my expenses. Pretty soon I will start driving and need to help pay for a car, car insurance, my clothes, and other things I need, so getting a job then is essential. I understand you can't be paying for everything for me and it is time to get a job soon. I think it will be easier to have a job in the summer, even though it is my time off. I will also have to make some sacrifices then, such as not staying out too late on work nights and possibly waking up early for work. I know it is important to start working soon because in a few years I'll be in college and won't always have your help with paying for my needs. If I don't start soon, I might be too used to you paying for everything and not have very good financial skills, so I better start this summer when school is out.

Even though I think getting a job right now wouldn't be such a good idea, I'm open to your opinions and we can talk about this. I'm not sure if I'm ready for a job yet, but maybe starting a small job for a few hours a week would work. I can do things around the house, or get small jobs mowing neighbor's lawns, cleaning houses, washing cars, walking people's pets, etc. Those things won't be a full-time commitment and I could handle them better. I'll start looking for jobs to apply for in the summer time, and hopefully will get a good job that pays well!

Focus & Meaning

Content & Development

Organization

Language Use & Style

Mechanics & Conventions

Holistic Score: 3

[Holistic Feedback Report](#)[Error Summary Report](#)[Print Report](#) [Print Essay](#)

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Focus & Meaning

below proficient

proficient

adv. proficient

Jenna, on a scale of one to six, your response to **this assignment was rated a 3 for focus**. Focus relates to your ability to present a consistent, unified message and stay on topic.

Your focus is limited. Typically, a response at this level has a reasonably clear purpose evident, though the presentation may stray from the controlling point. The response may lack focus and cohesion.

Jenna, now that you are ready to revise, try some of these ideas to improve the focus in your writing.

Revision Goal 1: State your opinion.

1. Your opinion is what you believe about the issue. Did you state your opinion in one sentence? Highlight this sentence in yellow.
2. If you did not write your opinion in one sentence, write it at the end of your introduction now. For example, if the issue is whether or not students should wear school uniforms, your essay should clearly state whether or not you support this.

Before Revision: Imagine wearing the same outfit to school every day. Some schools require boys and girls to wear school uniforms. All the students might wear white button-down shirts with either navy blue pants for boys or navy blue skirts for girls. Our school does not require students to wear uniforms.

Frank's Strategy: *I wrote a lot of details about school uniforms, but I did not clearly state my opinion on the issue. I need to state my opinion clearly.*

After Revision: Imagine wearing the same outfit to school every day. Some schools require boys and girls to wear school uniforms. All the students might wear white button-down shirts with either navy blue pants for boys or skirts for girls. Even though our school does not require students to wear uniforms, I believe that having school uniforms is a good idea for three reasons.

Frank's Reflection: *At the end of introduction, I clearly stated my opinion: "I believe that having school uniforms is a good idea for three reasons."*

Revision Goal 2: Understand your purpose and audience.

1. Read the prompt and find the audience. Are you writing for friends and students, for parents or other adults, for newspaper readers?
2. Make sure the words you wrote in your essay are appropriate for your audience. For example, if you are writing to adults, you should NOT use slang or contractions.

Example:

Before Revision: Some schools require all kids to wear these uniforms. They'll wear white button-down shirts with navy blue pants or skirts. Having school uniforms is a cool idea for three reasons.

Frank's Strategy: *I used informal language, "all kids to wear these uniforms," "They'll," and "cool" that should be replaced with more formal language because I am writing to adults.*

After Revision: Some schools require boys and girls to wear school uniforms. Students might wear white button-down shirts with either navy blue pants for boys or navy blue skirts for girls. Having school uniforms is a good idea for three reasons.

[Activities and Resources](#)

Student Name : Jenna Cho
Class Name : Tech Talk Group
Assignment : After-School Job (R4)
Assigned By : Harry Barfoot

View/Print Essay

Dear Mom and Dad,

I love flipping burgers. I really do.

I'm ready for an after-school job. I know you're worried that having a job during the school year will take away from my homework time, but I have become pretty good at managing my time. I could come home after school, do homework for an hour or two, then head to work. Plus, I can do some homework during the flex period at school.

I think it's about time I became more independent and learned how to be responsible for my own spending money. Imagine what I'll learn about responsibility, ethics and dealing with people by making hamburgers, serving fries and wiping down tables.

And I'll never have to ask you for money again. It's a win-win situation!

Think about it.

Jenna

These scores are based on a [6-Point Scale](#)

SCORING CATEGORY	INTELLIMETRIC SCORES	HUMAN SCORES
Holistic Score	3	n/a
Focus and Meaning	3	n/a
Content and Development	3	n/a
Organization	3	n/a
Language Use and Style	4	n/a
Mechanics and Convention	4	n/a