New England Common Assessment Program

Released Items Support Materials 2008

Grade 11 Writing

Everyday Life at the End of the Last Ice Age
Informational Writing (Report)

A student wrote this fact sheet about life 12,000 years ago, at the end of the last ice age. Read the fact sheet. Then write a response to the prompt that follows.

Everyday Life at the End of the Last Ice Age

- people lived in bands of about 25 members
- lived mainly by hunting and gathering
- shared decision-making fairly equally among members in a band
- each person skilled in every type of job
- diet: small and large mammals, fish, shellfish, fruits, wild greens and vegetables, grains, roots, and nuts
- approximately 10,000 years ago woolly mammoth became extinct
- nomadic based on time of year or movement of animal herds
- cooked meat by roasting it on a spit over a fire or by boiling it inside a piece of leather secured by a twig
- gathered herbs
- made everything themselves: tools, homes, clothing, medicines, etc.
- worked about 2–3 hours a day getting food
- worked about 2–3 hours a day making and repairing tools and clothes
- spent remainder of day relaxing with family and friends
- told stories, danced, sang, and played games
- owned very few possessions
- no concept of rich or poor
- communicated through art (painting and sculpture) and the spoken word
- buried their dead and had concepts of religion and an afterlife
- sometimes adorned themselves with ornaments and decorations such as jewelry, tattoos, body painting, and elaborate hairstyles

1 What would a person from 12,000 years ago find familiar and/or different about life today? Select relevant information from the fact sheet and use your own knowledge to write a report.

10.6 Informational Writing
Reports, Procedures, or Persuasive Writing—Organizing and Conveying Information

10.6.1 In informational writing, students organize ideas/concepts by using a text structure appropriate to focus/controlling idea or thesis (e.g., purpose, audience, context)
10.6.2 In informational writing, students organize ideas/concepts by selecting appropriate and relevant information (excluding extraneous details) to set context

10.7 Informational Writing (Reports, Procedures, or Persuasive Writing)
Organizing and Conveying Information

10.7.1 In informational writing, students effectively convey purpose by establishing a topic
10.7.2 In informational writing, students effectively convey purpose by stating and maintaining a focus/controlling idea/thesis
10.7.3 In informational writing, students effectively convey purpose by writing with a sense of audience, when appropriate
10.7.4 In informational writing, students effectively convey purpose by establishing an authoritative voice
10.7.5 In informational writing, students effectively convey purpose by using precise and descriptive language that clarifies and supports intent

10.8 Informational Writing (Reports, Procedures, or Persuasive Writing)
Using Elaboration Strategies

10.8.1 In informational writing, students demonstrate use of a range of elaboration strategies by including facts and details relevant to focus/controlling idea or thesis, and excluding extraneous information
10.8.2 In informational writing, students demonstrate use of a range of elaboration strategies by including sufficient details or facts for appropriate depth of information*:* naming, describing, explaining, comparing, contrasting, or using visual images to support intended purpose
10.8.3 In informational writing, students demonstrate use of a range of elaboration strategies by addressing readers' concerns (anticipating and addressing potential problems, mistakes, or misunderstandings that might arise for the audience)
10.8.4 In informational writing, students demonstrate use of a range of elaboration strategies by commenting on the significance of the information (in reports, throughout the piece; in procedural or persuasive writing, as appropriate)

10.1 Structures of Language
Applying Understanding of Sentences, Paragraphs, Text Structures

10.1.1 Students demonstrate command of the structures of sentences, paragraphs, and text by using varied sentence length and structure to enhance meaning (e.g., including phrases and clauses)

10.1.3 Students demonstrate command of the structures of sentences, paragraphs, and text by recognizing organizational structures within paragraphs or within texts

10.1.4 Students demonstrate command of the structures of sentences, paragraphs, and text by applying a format and text structure appropriate to purpose, audience, and context

10.9 Writing Conventions
Applying Rules of Grammar, Usage, and Mechanics

10.9.1 In independent writing, students demonstrate command of appropriate English conventions by applying rules of standard English usage to correct grammatical errors

10.9.4 In independent writing, students demonstrate command of appropriate English conventions by applying appropriate punctuation to various sentence patterns to enhance meaning

10.9.5 In independent writing, students demonstrate command of appropriate English conventions by applying conventional and word-derivative spelling patterns/rules

Scoring Guide:

Score	Description
6	• purpose is clear throughout; strong focus/controlling idea OR strongly stated purpose focuses the writing • intentionally organized for effect • fully developed details; rich and/or insightful elaboration supports purpose • distinctive voice, tone, and style enhance meaning • consistent application of the rules of grade-level grammar, usage, and mechanics
5	• purpose is clear; focus/controlling idea is maintained throughout • well organized and coherent throughout • details are relevant and support purpose; details are sufficiently elaborated • strong command of sentence structure; uses language to enhance meaning • consistent application of the rules of grade-level grammar, usage, and mechanics
4	• purpose is evident; focus/controlling idea may not be maintained • generally organized and coherent • details are relevant and mostly support purpose • well-constructed sentences; uses language well • may have some errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics
3	• writing has a general purpose • some sense of organization; may have lapses in coherence • some relevant details support purpose • uses language adequately; may show little variety of sentence structures • may have some errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics
2	• attempted or vague purpose • attempted organization; lapses in coherence • generalized, listed, or undeveloped details • may lack sentence control or may use language poorly • may have errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics that interfere with meaning
1	• minimal evidence of purpose • little or no organization • random or minimal details • rudimentary or deficient use of language • may have errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics that interfere with meaning
0	Response is totally incorrect or irrelevant.
Blank	No response

Student Writing Sample—Score Point 6

1

In today's hectic and modern world of computers, telephones, and technology, it is surprising to think that our society could reflect the society of neanderthals that roamed the Earth almost 12,000 years ago. However, despite how outlandish this claim sounds, it is, in fact, correct. The society of the cave people, albeit primitive, is quite similiar to the ways we choose to live today, in the 21st century. There is a distinct correlation between our communication methods, diets, and how we choose to spend our time that cannot be ignored. Despite what any modern-day aristocrat may argue, scientific evidence has proven that the society of today resembles the society of yesterday.

Despite the obvious lack of cellular phones, computers, and fax machines, the cavepeople still found methods of communication that are similiar to our communication methods today. The cavepeople lived in groups (called bands) with many members, which resembles the close proximities we keep with other humans today. With so many members living within close range of one another, they needed to create ways to communicate. Thus, artwork was created. Cavepeople were more than happy to paint images on cave walls that depicted epic battles or cultural events that they could share with one another. They also created small

Student Writing Sample—Score Point 6

statues (fetishes) that were meant to bring luck, fertility, or other desired outcomes. Statues and artwork that deliver messages or meanings are in large supply in today's world. Tattoos, styled hair, and jewelry are also seen frequently in today's society, much like the body art the cavepeople gave themselves. This bodily art shows social class, beliefs, and affiliations not only in our society, but in the society of the cave-dwellers as well. Finally, the most well-known form of communication - speech - was, and is, excercised in both communities. This speech gave way to stories, and these stories to songs, and before any one could realize it, language had opened new doors for the the cavemen society. To this day, the spoken word plays a huge role to almost every culture on the face of the Earth.

The diets of the cavepeople and the diets of today's modern families also show distinct similarities. The cavepeople were hunters and gatherers, who thrived on an omnivorous diet of meat and plants. They consumed animals, fruits, berries and grains, which can be found in the weekly, if not daily, diet of the average American. Facinatingly enough, cave people also cooked their meat, often roasting it over an open fire. Although roasting meat on a spit is rarely seen in today's world, we still wouldn't dream of eating raw, uncooked flesh. Unfortunatly, all the consumption and hunting of meat by the cavepeople led to the extinction of the Wolly Mammoth. This is not unlike today's

Student Writing Sample—Score Point 6

society, were over-hunting and over-eating is causing the population of certain species to dwindle.

Lastly, the ways in which cavepeople spent their time were similar to the ways that we spend our time today. The cavepeople, like us, spent their days working. They devoted several hours of their day to collecting food and performing household tasks, such as making clothing, creating tools, and building shelters. The people of today's society can often be found working at these tasks, mimicing the behaviors of the neanderthals. When they weren't working, they spent their time with one another, playing games and relaxing with their families.

- Writing has a clear purpose and focus with control of ideas throughout.
- Writing includes supporting details with sufficient elaboration.

Student Writing Sample—Score Point 5

❶

12,000 years ago, when the wooly mammoth still roamed the quet earth, life was thriving and animals were abundant. The people that existed among these creatures lived an entirely different lifestyle than people do, today. Everything from basic life needs to family and social matters have evolved too much for the good of any living creature on earth.

Today, a normal sized household would consist of four or five members. In most houses, deision making about finances and other important matters is left to one or two people in the household. In contrast, the people that lived 12,000 years ago were not part of a small family unit. People lived and prospered in groups that were made of about 25 members. Everyone in the group had an equal responsibility to help with decision making and almost every other aspect of life. People living in those ages knew and could practice well every job that needed to be done, unlike the people of the present. People now dont have any

Student Writing Sample—Score Point 5

skill in doing the things needed to keep life sustained without any technology. People now depend on corporations to manufacture everything for them; tools, clothing, medicine ect. All the things the nomads needed 12,000 years ago, they created with their own hands.
Is it not apparent that the people of 2006 have become, in essence, lazy and unskilled people? Have we lost the simple joys and rights that our brothers and sisters of 12,000 years ago embraced and thrived upon? The simple-hearted souls of years ago knew no concept of rich or poor. They owned very few possessions, and for leisure they told stories, danced, sang and played games. What would the average person of today do if they had a minute to relax; flick on the television. They might grab a bite to eat, probably a widely manufactured food product to heat up in the microwave. A spit over a fire is all people of 12,000 years ago had, and they were healthy and happy.

It is believed that the nomadic tribes of years long passed were too simple minded for anything useful. But the truth is, has our world become too complex for our own good? People

Student Writing Sample—Score Point 5

here given strong hands and minds for good
purposes, only to be wasted on gameboys
and television sets. The days of herb gathering
and hunting and gathering are being traded
for "open 24 hours" McDonalds, which leaves
one conclusion. Evolution has started traveling
at the speed of light, and if it does not
slow down, a fatty food wide screen haze
might be a slow death for us all.

- Writing is organized and coherent.
- Writing includes supporting details with sufficient elaboration

Student Writing Sample—Score Point 4

1

A person from 12,000 years ago would find many differences and some similarities when comaring their life to our life today. That person would specifically compare their lifestyle to towns and cities, modern culture, and modern ways of survival. Some aspects of modern life are similar, and some aspects are different.

12,000 years ago, people lived in bands of about 25 members. The people in the bands would work for the band as a whole, so that everyone was equal. Everyone aquired the same skills, so they all were able to do the same jobs. They moved from location to location according the time of year and the movement of animal herds. In modern life there are many more people in a town or city than there were in bands 12,000 years ago. Most people work for themselves and not the town or city that they live in. Also, most people now-a-days have different skills than eachother, so that society can grow based on the increasing knowledge of specific skills. Modern people also are not as nomadic as people from the end of the last Ice Age. Most people stay at one location, called home, for the majority of their life.

Modern culture is also different from culture 12,000 years ago. Communication is much more advanced

Student Writing Sample—Score Point 4

now than it was then. Back then, people would communicate by paintings or spoken language. Now, people do the same, but they also communicate by telephone, mail, e-mail, and other new technologies that people didn't have 12,000 years ago. Today, many people are pejudged by race and financial status. One of the good things about life 12,000 years ago was that everybody was considered equal, and race had no influence on how people were treated. There was no concept of rich or poor. One similarity between their life and ours is that they buried their dead as we do, and they had concepts of religion and afterlife. Many religions today are formed around the idea of what happens to a person when they die.

12,000 years ago people were under more pressure to survive than modern age people. Modern society does not have to try as had to survive as people who lived in the ice age. They had to gather herbs, and hunt and kill animals to survive. We do the same thing, but we are not forced to and it is easier to do.

There are more differences than similarities between life 12,000 years ago and life today. Bands are smaller than towns and cities, and

Student Writing Sample—Score Point 4

they function much differently. Their Culture is much different as well. The ways of survival are also much different.

- Writing is organized and coherent.
- Writing has some supporting details.

Student Writing Sample—Score Point 3

1

Everyday Life at the End of the last Ice Age

Life during Ice Ages were more difficult than during any other time. Some of the things people went through and did 12,000 years ago, are similar to what we do now. There are a great many things that they did differently too.

They used to travel in bands, worked each job equally, and tried their hardest to survive the freezing cold. People owned little to no possessions because they were always on the run, trying to find safer, warmer shelter. The art that they used, painting and sculpture, was used more as communication to tell stories than for anything else. Work was different as well. People had to work to survive, between 2-3 hours of gathering food, and between 2-3 hours of repairing tools and clothing.

Today, the only "bands" of people, are families, and we only travel out of choice, not because we'll freeze to death. We also own countless possessions, because we work just as many hours, if not more, as people did during the Ice Ages. Our communication has greatly increased since then, and our art has far more uses than communication. Some

Student Writing Sample—Score Point 3

people work 40 hours a week, when 12,000 years ago, the most they did was ~30 hours a week.

Overall, there are many things that have changed since the times of the Ice Ages, but if people hadn't survived, we wouldn't be here today. They survived certain death, when we can't even begin to imagine what they really went through.

- Writing has a general purpose with attempted focus.
- Writing has some supporting details.

Student Writing Sample—Score Point 2

1

A person from the last Ice Age would find similar things in our life time now. As for example; parents tell stories to their child, people go to disco and dance; also people play games as they did 12,000 years ago.

Also we can say that people now spend sometime relaxing with their families or friends, it could be going to the beach, the mall, or going to the movies, that's another thing that people from the past would find similar to their life, which it is relaxing.

There is one more thing that they would find similar, and I think is the tattoos, and jewelry, because people do tattoos on their bodies as a symbolism of something their love, or to identify members of gangs.

Finally, I think the world is always going to have or do from the past, because that's where we come from, so we will always have some similarities from our people from the past.

- Writing has limited word choice and/or control of sentence structure.
- Writing has lapses in organization or coherence, which may interfere with understanding.

Student Writing Sample—Score Point 1

1

They don't really have to make
their own clothing. Mostly every
body has a home to live in.
We dont beery the dead people on are
land just anywhere. We do have to
work to get money for are food
though. We can cook are meat inside
are homes but they have to cook it
outside over a fire, they only eat
mainly fish, shellfish, fruits, wild
greens vegtables, grains, roots and nuts.
We all spend some days just
relaxing with family and
friends like they did! People now
work 2-3 hours a day making
and repairing tools + clothes
for people.

- Writing has minimal or random details.
- Writing has limited word choice and/or control of sentence structure.

Student Writing Sample—Score Point 0

❶

Don't know

• Writing lacks evident purpose or focus.