

# ALST Writing Strategies for Writing to Sources Section

## Dr. Sieben

### I. Logistics:

- ◆ Writing to Sources questions make up about 60% of your test score on the ALST.
- ◆ There will be 2 Focused Constructed-Response Questions & 1 Extended Response Question.
- ◆ It is estimated that each Focused Constructed-Response item will take up to 20 minutes to complete. Since there are two of these, this section could take up to 40 minutes to complete.
- ◆ It is estimated that the Extended Response question will take up to 60 minutes to complete.
- ◆ All questions require you to write your responses for an audience of educated adults. Avoid use of slang and casual language. Do not use the words “you” or “I” in your response. Keep it formal.
- ◆ The final version of all responses needs to conform to the conventions of standard written American English. Be sure to read through your response after you have finished writing it to edit for both content and grammar.

**Note:** *There will be two passages and a graphic for you to read, interpret, and write your responses about for both the focused constructed-responses and the extended response question.*

### II. Logistics for Focused Constructed-Response (Short-Answer) Questions:

1. Both questions require a response of 100-200 words.
2. Allow yourself about 20 minutes to construct each response for these short-answer questions.
3. There is a list of about 3 tasks that each question requires your response “to do” in your answer. So make sure to attend to each of those items on the “checklist” provided to you.

Example Question: In a response of 100-200 words, identify which author presents a more compelling argument. Your response should:

- outline the specific claims made in each passage;
- evaluate the validity, relevance, and sufficiency of evidence used to support each claim; and
- include examples from both passages to support your evaluation.

### **III. The Writing Process for Focused Constructed-Response**

#### **Questions:**

1. *Read all the questions first.* This will give you some context clues for what the passage will be about and will help you answer questions.
2. *Read both passages and the graphic for Main Ideas.* Knowing the Main Idea and Main Argument of each text will help you to construct your responses.
3. *Take notes while reading.* As you are reading each text, jot down the main claim, reasons, and evidence that supports the claim. This will help you prepare for writing all responses.
4. *Reread the first constructed response question.* Take notes about important parts of the question that need to be answered in your response.
5. *Outline your response.* List the reasons and evidence you will provide and analyze to support your claim.
6. *Write your response.* Use your knowledge of well-developed paragraph format, and construct a focused response that directly answers the question. Since this short-response does not require you to write a full essay, treat each paragraph written as a well-developed body paragraph. A well-developed body paragraph contains
  - a. **Topic Sentence** (i.e., main idea of the paragraph)
  - b. **Commentary** that explains the topic sentence (i.e., reason for validity of topic sentence)
  - c. **Examples/ Evidence** from the text to support the central idea of the paragraph (Use proper quotation format and gives sources credit.)
  - d. **Analysis** as to the validity of the evidence
  - e. **Conclusion** of the main points in the paragraph (i.e., reinforce central idea)
7. *Edit your response* for content and grammar.
8. *Repeat steps 4-7* for the second constructed response question.

### **IV. Logistics for Extended-Response (Essay) Question:**

1. This essay question requires a response of 400-600 words.
2. The question will most likely ask you to construct a written argument.
3. Allow yourself about 60 minutes to construct your Extended-Response.
4. There is a list of about 4 tasks that the question requires your response “to do” in your answer. So make sure to attend to each of those items on the “checklist” provided to you.

**Example Question:** In an essay in your own words of approximately 400-600 words, present a fully developed argument that introduces and supports a claim assessing ....Your argument must:

- include a knowledgeable claim that demonstrates an understanding of the topic;
- use valid reasoning that draws on and extends the arguments in the sources provided;

- support your claim with relevant and sufficient evidence from all three sources; &
- anticipate and address at least one counterclaim.

## **V. The Writing Process for Extended-Response (Essay) Question:**

1. *Reread the extended-response question.* (Remember, you already read the question before reading all of the texts.) Take notes about important parts of the question that need to be answered in your response.
2. *Outline your response.* List the reasons and evidence you will provide and analyze to support your argumentative claim. (Be sure to include a section for a counterclaim that you will recognize and refute.)
3. *Write your response.* Use your knowledge of effective essay format, and construct an extended response that directly answers the question. You can even use the question to construct your thesis/ claim. Your essay should contain:
  - a. *Introduction*
    - i. *Short discussion of topic*
    - ii. *Argumentative Claim/ Thesis Statement*
  - b. *Body Paragraph #1 (Reason #1 with Evidence & Analysis)*
  - c. *Body Paragraph #2 (Reason #2 with Evidence & Analysis)*
  - d. *Body Paragraph #3 (Reason #3 with Evidence & Analysis)*
  - e. *Body Paragraph #4 (Counterclaim/ counterargument & a rebuttal)*
  - f. *Conclusion*
    - i. *Argumentative Claim/ Thesis Statement*
    - ii. *Summary of list of reasons provided to support claim*
    - iii. *Reinforce which text(s) significantly reinforce this claim*

\*Note: All evidence provided to support your argument needs to be taken directly from information provided in the texts. Be sure to give the proper sources credit when citing evidence. Use well-developed body paragraphs for body paragraphs. (Either 3 or 4 body paragraphs can be written depending on time. If you start to run out of time, skip a third body paragraph for reason #3 and recognize a counterclaim in body paragraph #3. Remember to refute the counterclaim.

A well-developed body paragraph contains (See above for more details):

1.Topic Sentence, 2.Commentary, 3.Examples/ Evidence, 4. Analysis, 5. Conclusion

4. *Edit your response* for content and grammar.