



TNCore

*Tennessee Department of Education's
Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program
for English Language Arts*

**Grades 6–7 Writing
Practice Task I
2014–2015**

TCAP Grades 6–7 Writing Practice Task I

Directions

Student Directions

Today you will be taking the Grades 6–7 Writing Task. The task is made up of two texts and two prompts about those texts. For each prompt, you are to plan and write an essay about the text(s) according to the instructions provided. Your essays will be scored as rough drafts, but you should watch for careless errors.

There are some important things to remember as you complete the task:

- The time you have for reading both texts and answering the prompts will be 120 minutes.
- Read each prompt carefully and think about the best way to answer it.
- Write only about the texts and prompts you are given.
- You may complete pre-writing activities and notes before beginning your response, but do not write your response on the same pages as your pre-writing activities or notes.
- If you do not know the answer to a prompt, skip it and go on to the next prompt. You may return to it later if there is time.

Topic

Lawmakers and leaders disagree about the best way to reduce the alarming rate of car accidents caused by teenage drivers.

Texts

- **“Should the Driving Age Be Raised to 18?”** from *The New York Times Upfront*
- **“Do Teens Need Graduated Licenses?”** from *Current Events*

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Text 1

Text 1 Introduction

In “Should the Driving Age Be Raised to 18?” from *The New York Times Upfront*, two leaders present opposing views on raising the driving age to 18 years old.

Please read “Should the Driving Age Be Raised to 18?” and then answer Prompt 1.

Should the Driving Age Be Raised to 18?

The New York Times Upfront

Alarmed by car accidents involving teenagers, a number of states are considering raising the age for getting a license.

1 **YES**

2 On Dec. 29, 2005, four teenage boys from Chicago went out for a late-night drive and had a
3 terrible accident. The car spun out of control and struck several objects, including a giant light
4 pole. Two of the boys—a 16-year-old and a 17-year-old—were killed. The driver of the car was
5 just 16.

6 After this tragic accident, thousands of people began asking what could be done to prevent this
7 from happening again.

8 The answer is raising the driving age. That’s why I introduced legislation to raise the driving age
9 in Illinois from 16 to 18. I realize this idea is controversial, but I could not stand by and watch
10 one more young person die because he or she was not quite ready to be behind the wheel.

11 All 50 states prohibit 16-year-olds from drinking alcohol, buying cigarettes, and purchasing
12 handguns. Yet somehow most states are willing to put them in charge of a car, which could
13 potentially be a deadly weapon.

14 Between 1995 and 2004, there were 30,917 fatalities in accidents that involved 15-to-17-year-old
15 drivers, according to a study by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety. About a third of those
16 deaths were the teen drivers themselves. The rest were pedestrians, passengers, and people in
17 cars that teenage drivers struck.

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Text 1

18 As an Illinois lawmaker, I cannot sit back and watch more innocent lives be claimed because of
19 lack of experience. Raising the driving age may seem burdensome to parents and busy teens, but
20 we have to remember that this is a proposal about safety, not convenience.

—**Representative John D’Amico**
Democrat, Illinois State Legislature

21 **NO**

22 If your neighbor robs a bank, should you go to jail? No. If your classmate gets in an accident,
23 should your driver’s license be taken away? Of course not. Neither situation is fair. Raising the
24 driving age will punish all young drivers for the mistakes of a few of their peers.

25 In this country we live by the principle of innocent until proven guilty. Those who want to raise
26 the driving age have labeled teens guilty before they’ve gotten in an accident or before they’ve
27 even stepped into a car. They believe that just because of your birth date, you are dangerous and
28 must be punished by having your ability to drive taken from you.

29 Those who favor raising the driving age say that statistics show teenagers are more likely to get
30 into accidents than adults.

31 What they don’t say is that statistics also show that men of all ages are 77 percent more likely to
32 kill someone while driving than women. If people want to save lives by raising the driving age,
33 then how about saving lives by allowing only women to drive?

34 Except raising the driving age won’t save lives. Studies show that it is inexperience, not age, that
35 causes accidents. Raising the driving age will just create inexperienced, accident-prone drivers at
36 18 instead of 16.

37 Teens need the ability to drive just as much as anyone else—to get to school, to get to work, to
38 get to sports or band practice, or just to go out with their friends.

39 Cars are necessary for mobility in this country. Taking that away is a large disruption to the lives
40 of teen-agers—for no good reason.

—**Alex Koroknay-Palicz**
National Youth Rights Association

“Should the Driving Age Be Raised to 18?” From *The New York Times Upfront*. Copyright © 2014 by Scholastic Inc. Used by permission of Scholastic Inc.

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Practice Task I

Prompt 1

Prompt 1

You have now read “Should the Driving Age Be Raised to 18?” In this text, two points of view are presented, one by Representative John D’Amico, and the other by Alex Koroknay-Palicz.

Write an essay that analyzes the two different points of view, explaining how each is conveyed in the text. Be sure to cite evidence from the text to support your analysis. Follow the conventions of standard written English.

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Text 2

Text 2 Introduction

In “Do Teens Need Graduated Licenses?” from *Current Events*, the author presents differing opinions on the effectiveness of and the need for graduated driver’s licenses for teenagers.

Please read “Do Teens Need Graduated Licenses?” and then answer Prompt 2.

Do Teens Need Graduated Licenses?

Current Events

1 It is an event that many young people look forward to from the time they first ride in a car:
2 getting their driver’s license. A license can mean the freedom to get around without having to get
3 a ride. But some teens pay a heavy price for that freedom.

4 Each year, car accidents result in more teen deaths than any other cause. In an effort to cut the
5 number of driving accidents involving teens, 26 states have adopted graduated driver’s licenses
6 (GDLs). Six of those states passed new GDL laws this year and many others are also considering
7 GDLs.

8 GDL systems vary from state to state. They generally allow teens to earn driving privileges
9 gradually, rather than all at once. For instance, some GDLs allow 16-year-olds to drive only
10 during certain daylight hours; others require them to drive with an adult for a set number of
11 hours before receiving a license. As teens gain experience, they earn more privileges.

12 Supporters of GDLs say the GDL system saves lives. Opponents of GDLs say that the licenses
13 are ineffective and needlessly complicate teens’ lives.

14 **Teens Need Time to Learn**

15 According to the American Automobile Association (AAA), teens account for only 7 percent of
16 the drivers on the road, but they are involved in 20 percent of all accidents reported to police.
17 That’s because many teens do not have the road experience necessary to make safe driving
18 decisions, GDL supporters say.

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Text 2

19 Graduated licensing gives teens that experience step by step, often with adult supervision. This is
20 much better, GDL supporters say, than allowing teens full driving privileges after only a few
21 hours of instruction. “Our current programs don’t teach young people to drive,” said James E.
22 Hall of the National Transportation Safety Board. “They teach them how to pass a [driving]
23 test.” Hall and others emphasize that driving is a privilege, not a right.

24 According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Association, states using GDLs have a 5 to 15
25 percent drop in teen accidents. That, GDL supporters say, is an argument for GDLs.

GDLs Don’t Work

27 Many opponents question the effectiveness of GDLs. They note that GDL restrictions reduce the
28 number of teen drivers on the road. That reduction, they say, and not an improvement in teen
29 driving skills, is the reason for the drop in the number of crashes involving teens.

30 Critics say GDLs may even increase teen accident rates. Maryland, for example, imposed teen
31 driving restrictions in 1979 and saw the number of 16-year-olds in fatal accidents triple by 1988.

32 Opponents of GDLs say that GDLs make it harder for teens to get to jobs and to after-school
33 activities. GDLs, said Todd Franklin of the National Motorists Association, “[needlessly]
34 complicate the lives of millions of families.”

“Do Teens Need Graduated Licenses?” From *Current Events*, February 12, 1999. Copyright © 1999 by The Weekly Reader Corporation. Used by permission of Scholastic Inc.

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Prompt 2

Prompt 2

You have now read two texts relating to teen driving:

- **“Should the Driving Age Be Raised to 18?”** from *The New York Times Upfront*
- **“Do Teens Need Graduated Licenses?”** from *Current Events*

Write an essay that argues which practice will be more successful in decreasing teen car accidents: waiting until age 18 to drive or participating in a graduated licensing program. Be sure to cite evidence from both texts to support your argument. Follow the conventions of standard written English.

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