

TCAP Writing Operational Test

TCAP/WA

DIRECTIONS

In a few moments, you will see a passage(s) and a prompt. You are to plan and write an essay about the passage(s) according to the instructions provided in the prompt. This activity will show how well you write. Express your thoughts clearly and make your writing interesting to the reader. Your essay will be scored as a rough draft, but you should watch for careless errors.

Before writing, spend some time reading the passage(s), thinking about the prompt, and planning your thoughts.

WRITE ONLY ON THE PROMPT AND PASSAGE(S) YOU ARE GIVEN.

The time you have for writing is 60 minutes.

PROMPT G – GRADE 8 WRITING ASSESSMENT
TENNESSEE COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT PROGRAM (TCAP)
2013 OPERATIONAL TEST

The following passages examine some of the reasons societies settle new areas.

“America as a Religious Refuge”

from Religion and the Founding of the American Republic

Many of the British North American colonies that eventually formed the United States of America were settled in the seventeenth century by men and women, who, in the face of European persecution, refused to compromise passionately held religious convictions and fled Europe. The New England colonies, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Maryland were conceived and established “as plantations of religion.” Some settlers who arrived in these areas came for secular motives—“to catch fish” as one New Englander put it—but the great majority left Europe to worship God in the way they believed to be correct. They enthusiastically supported the efforts of their leaders to create “a city on a hill” or a “holy experiment,” whose success would prove that God’s plan for his churches could be successfully realized in the American wilderness. Even colonies like Virginia, which were planned as commercial ventures, were led by entrepreneurs who considered themselves “militant Protestants” and who worked diligently to promote the prosperity of the church.

The religious persecution that drove settlers from Europe to the British North American colonies sprang from the conviction, held by Protestants and Catholics alike, that uniformity of religion must exist in any given society. This conviction rested on the belief that there was one true religion and that it was the duty of the civil authorities to impose it, forcibly if necessary, in the interest of saving the souls of all citizens. Nonconformists could expect no mercy and might be executed as heretics. The dominance of the concept, denounced by Roger Williams as “inforced uniformity of religion,” meant majority religious groups who controlled political power punished dissenters in their midst. In some areas Catholics persecuted Protestants, in others Protestants persecuted Catholics, and in still others Catholics and Protestants persecuted wayward coreligionists. Although England renounced religious persecution in 1689, it persisted on the European continent. Religious persecution, as observers in every century have commented, is often bloody and implacable and is remembered and resented for generations.

“America as a Religious Refuge,” from *Religion and the Founding of the American Republic*. From The Library of Congress (loc.gov). Public Domain.

Space Settlements: Spreading Life throughout the Solar System

by Mike Griffin

Why?

Growth

Why build space settlements? Why do weeds grow through cracks in sidewalks? Why did life crawl out of the oceans and colonize land? Because living things want to grow and expand. We have the ability to live in space, therefore we will—but not this fiscal year.

The key advantage of space settlements is the ability to **build new land**, rather than take it from someone else. This allows a huge expansion of humanity without war or destruction of Earth's biosphere. The asteroids alone provide enough material to make new orbital land hundreds of times greater than the surface of Earth, divided into millions of colonies. This land can easily support trillions of people.

A Nice Place to Live

A few features of orbital real estate are worth mentioning:

- *Great Views.* Many astronauts have returned singing the praises of their view of Earth from orbit. Low earth orbit settlements, and eventually settlements near Jupiter and Saturn, will have some of the most spectacular views in the solar system. Of course, all space settlements will have unmatched views of the stars, unhindered by clouds, air pollution, or (with some care) bright city lights.
- *Low-g recreation.* Consider circular swimming pools around and near the axis of rotation. You should be able to dive **up** into the water! Sports and dance at low or zero-g will be fantastic. For dancers, note that in sufficiently low gravity, always available near the axis of rotation, anyone can jump ten times higher than Baryshnikov ever dreamed.
- *Environmental Independence.* On Earth we all share a single biosphere. We breathe the same air, drink the same water, and the misdeeds of some are visited on the bodies of all. Each space settlement is completely sealed and does not share atmosphere or water with other settlements or with Earth. Thus, if one settlement pollutes their air, no one else need breathe it.
- *Custom living.* Since the entire environment is man-made, you can really get what you want. Like lake-front property? Make lots of lakes. Like sunsets? Program sunset simulations into the weather system every hour. Like to go barefoot? Make the entire environment foot-friendly.

Survival

Someday Earth will become uninhabitable. Before then humanity must move off the planet or become extinct. One potential near-term disaster is collision with a large comet or asteroid. Such a collision could kill billions of people. Large collisions have occurred in the past, destroying many species. Future collisions are inevitable, although we don't know when.

If there were a major collision today, not only would billions of people die, but recovery would be difficult since everyone would be affected. If major space settlements are built before the next collision, the unaffected space settlements can provide aid, much as we offer help when disaster strikes another part of the world.

Building space settlements will require a great deal of material. If NEOs (Near-Earth Orbiters) are used, then any asteroids heading for Earth can simply be torn apart to supply materials for building colonies and saving Earth at the same time.

Power and Wealth

Those who colonize space will control vast lands, enormous amounts of electrical power, and nearly unlimited material resources. The societies that develop these resources will create wealth beyond our wildest imagination and wield power—hopefully for good rather than for ill.

In the past, societies which have grown by colonization have gained wealth and power at the expense of those who were subjugated. Unlike previous colonization programs, space colonization will build new land, not steal it from the natives. Thus, the power and wealth born of space colonization will not come at the expense of others, but rather represent the fruits of great labors.

Source: NASA.gov

READ THIS WRITING PROMPT CAREFULLY BEFORE YOU BEGIN YOUR WRITING.

Settling New Lands

Write an expository essay comparing and contrasting how reasons for colonization have changed from settling America to attempting to settle space. Analyze how the texts provide conflicting information about why settling new lands is important. Draw evidence from the passages to support your analysis. Develop your topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, concrete details, or other information and examples. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling in your response.

You may use the space below for prewriting. However, only the lined pages of your answer document will be scored. You will have a time limit of 60 minutes.

This writing prompt must be returned with all test material.