



TNCore

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

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

TCAP Grades 6–7 Writing

Practice Task II

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

Professional ballerina Maria Tallchief and artist Rosa Bonheur both faced many obstacles. Each overcame those obstacles to become famous and successful.

Texts

- **“The Osage Firebird”** by Sudipta Bardhan
- **“A Life Painting Animals”** by Diana Childress

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Practice Task II

Text 1

Text 1 Introduction

In “**The Osage Firebird**” by **Sudipta Bardhan**, the author discusses the life and hard work of Maria Tallchief. Maria, born Betty Marie, had to overcome many obstacles and prejudices to pursue her dream of dancing.

Please read “The Osage Firebird” and then answer Prompt 1.

The Osage Firebird

Sudipta Bardhan-Quallen

1 As a child, Betty Marie Tallchief listened for hours to her grandmother’s stories of fire spirits
2 and animals that could talk. Much of what Betty Marie knew about her Osage heritage came
3 from Grandmother Tall Chief. She never forgot the tales, or the pride, that she learned at her
4 grandmother’s feet.

5 Born in 1925, Betty Marie spent part of her childhood on an Osage reservation in Oklahoma. She
6 saw herself as “a typical Indian girl—shy, docile¹, introverted.” Ballet brought her out of her
7 shell. She took her first ballet lesson when she was four years old. From that moment,
8 Betty Marie had her heart set on becoming a ballerina.

9 Talent Isn’t Enough

10 Betty Marie soon became a local star, performing at rodeos and county fairs. Her natural talent
11 made it easy for her to learn everything taught by her hometown dance instructor. But Betty
12 Marie soon learned that having talent wasn’t enough to make her a success. There was always
13 more work to do.

14 One instructor said that despite her talent, she hadn’t properly learned the basics. “He insisted we
15 go back to the beginning,” she explained. At first, Betty Marie was frustrated by this criticism.
16 But she soon realized that no matter how well she danced, she could always do better.

¹ **docile**: calm and obedient

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Text 1

17 Facing Prejudice

18 Betty Marie’s skills grew and grew. People in the world of dancing considered her special. But
19 outside that world, sometimes she encountered prejudice. When the Tallchief family moved from
20 the reservation to California, Betty Marie was teased because she was a Native American.

21 “At Beverly Vista School I was made to feel different,” she remembers. “Some of the students
22 made fun of my last name. A few made war whoops whenever they saw me, and asked why I
23 didn’t wear feathers.” Though being singled out because of her race bothered Betty Marie, the
24 teasing did not lessen her pride in being an Osage Indian. She would still announce her name to
25 new classmates with pleasure—Tallchief.

26 What’s in a Name?

27 Later in her career as a ballerina, Tallchief did change her first name. She began using the name
28 Maria instead of Betty Marie. She thought it sounded more sophisticated. Since most
29 professional ballerinas at the time were white and European, she might have chosen to change
30 her last name as well. A European last name would have seemed more traditional and might have
31 helped her career. But Tallchief refused to deny her heritage. Nothing would ever make her
32 change her last name.

33 Woman of Two Worlds

34 Maria Tallchief went on to do great things as a dancer. She became prima ballerina of the
35 New York City Ballet. She was the first American in a century to dance for the Paris Opera
36 Ballet. In 1953, President Eisenhower honored Tallchief, naming her “Woman of the Year.”

37 That same year, the state of Oklahoma declared June 29 “Maria Tallchief Day.” She was given a
38 special title by the Osage tribe. Grandmother Tall Chief chose the title, naming Betty Marie
39 Wa-Xth-Thonba, which means “woman of two worlds.”

40 Tallchief was touched by this recognition. She knew what her grandmother was saying when she
41 chose that title. “While I was a ballerina with an important career on the stage, I was also her
42 grandchild, an Osage woman and a daughter of the tribe.”

43 In her long career, Tallchief’s most famous performance was in *The Firebird*. Based on a
44 Russian folktale, this ballet tells the story of a strange creature that is half woman and half bird.
45 Those who watched her perform said that Tallchief had achieved the unbelievable—she had truly

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Text 1

46 become a bird of fire. As she danced, Tallchief must have remembered her grandmother’s voice
47 recounting the Osage legends of fire spirits walking the earth. Performing The Firebird, Tallchief
48 combined her heritage with the ballet, and truly became a woman of two worlds.

Bardhan-Quallen, Sudipta. “The Osage Firebird.” *Highlights for Children*. Jun. 2004, Vol. 59 Issue 6, p. 16–17.
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Prompt 1

Prompt 1

You have now read “The Osage Firebird.” In this text, the author divides the information into five major sections.

Write an essay that analyzes the structure of the text, including how the ideas in each of the five major sections contribute to the development of the passage as a whole. 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 “A Life Painting Animals” by **Diana Childress**, the author discusses painter Rosa Bonheur and the obstacles that she overcame to find success.

Please read “A Life Painting Animals” and then answer Prompt 2.

A Life Painting Animals

Diana Childress

Rosa Bonheur’s love of animals went hand in hand with her love of art.

1 “Moo!” “Baa!” Animal sounds filled the air as drovers prodded the cattle and sheep into town.
2 The September livestock market was underway. All at once, unnerved by the throngs of people,
3 the oxen lowered their long horns and charged. Screaming onlookers ran for cover. But
4 Rosa Bonheur stood her ground. She opened up her sketchbook and began to draw.

5 Rosa Bonheur never feared animals. As a small child in the south of France in the 1820s, she
6 terrified her parents by running into pastures to admire the bulls. When she grew up, she kept
7 lions as pets.

8 Rosa’s love of animals went hand in hand with her love of art. From early childhood, she played
9 with her artist father’s paints and brushes, painting the walls as high as she could reach. But her
10 path toward becoming one of the greatest animal painters of the nineteenth century was not easy.

11 Overcoming Obstacles

12 Her first obstacle was her father. Raymond Bonheur knew how hard it was to earn a living as an
13 artist. He decided his oldest daughter needed a more practical career. But Rosa stubbornly
14 refused to learn dressmaking. At last, when Rosa was thirteen, her father agreed to let her
15 study art.

16 At that time, art schools in France were closed to women. Since Rosa’s father believed in giving
17 women equal opportunities, he began to train her at home.

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Text 2

18 Every morning, before he went to work, he gave her a drawing assignment. One day he forgot to
19 take his oil paints with him. Rosa darted out to buy two pennies' worth of cherries, and spent the
20 day painting a picture of them on a small discarded canvas. Impressed by her skill, her father
21 declared her ready for the next step in her art education. She would copy paintings at the Louvre,
22 the national art museum in France.

23 Barely fourteen, Rosa was so excited her first day at the museum that her hand “trembled like a
24 leaf.” Within a few months her copies began to sell. Rosa’s proud father told her that if she kept
25 working, she would someday surpass the most celebrated woman artist in France, portrait painter
26 Elisabeth Vigée-Lebrun.

27 Rosa didn’t want to paint portraits of people. “Can’t I be famous for painting animals?” she
28 asked her father. . . .

29 Animals All Around

30 Rosa’s father set her next task—drawing live animals. She visited farms to observe and sketch
31 cows, sheep, goats, and horses. Pet chickens, ducks, quail, and rabbits crowded the family studio.
32 She painted animals again and again, eager to make them as life-like as she could.

33 At age nineteen, Rosa felt ready to submit two paintings to the Salon, an art show sponsored by
34 the French government. Salon juries rarely chose works by women artists, so Rosa was thrilled
35 when both paintings were accepted. . . .

36 Every year, she exhibited more animal paintings and sculptures. Critics began to notice her work.
37 In 1848 she won a first prize for a painting of red oxen. Even better, she received a commission
38 to do a work on the subject of ploughing.

39 Here was a chance to do a truly monumental painting! Rosa spent most of a year planning and
40 drawing sketches for it. “Ploughing in the Nivernais” drew much notice. The three teams of oxen
41 trudging across the eight-foot canvas looked so realistic that a farmer stopped in front of it and
42 exclaimed, “Those are oxen! And that is ploughing!”

43 Yet Rosa dreamed of an even larger, more dramatic painting. For months, she sketched horses
44 being traded at a Paris market and workhorses pulling city buses. To avoid attracting attention,
45 she wore men’s clothing. (She had to apply for permission from the Paris police to do so!) She
46 chose a huge canvas for the painting, one more than sixteen feet long and eight feet high.

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Text 2

47 **The Legion of Honor**

48 At the Salon in 1853, “The Horse Fair” created a sensation. Critics applauded her skillful realism
49 and the painting’s swirling harmony of color and line. Today this famous painting hangs in the
50 Metropolitan Museum in New York City. When you stand in front of it, one art historian writes,
51 you “can almost hear the shouting and the snorting and feel the ground shake under the assault of
52 the hooves.”

53 Rosa Bonheur painted animals for the rest of her life. Her paintings sold widely. With her
54 earnings, she purchased a small château, where she kept a menagerie of animals to pose for her.
55 In 1865, Rosa Bonheur became the first woman artist to receive France’s highest award, the
56 Cross of the Legion of Honor—a fitting tribute for an artist who would not let worries about
57 money, prejudice against women, or even a stampede stand in her way.

Childress, Diana. “A Life Painting Animals.” *Highlights for Children*. Jul 2003, Vol. 58 Issue 7, p. 8.
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Prompt 2

Prompt 2

You have now read two texts relating to people overcoming barriers to find success:

- **“The Osage Firebird”** by Sudipta Bardhan
- **“A Life Painting Animals”** by Diana Childress

One purpose of both texts is to inform the reader about ways that people have overcome obstacles and barriers to become successful. Write an essay that argues which of these two texts better develops this purpose. Be sure to cite evidence from both texts to support your argument. Follow the conventions of standard written English.

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