

English II Pre-Test Student Writing Samples
Sample 1

It's about that time of year again—when cold weather sets in and roads begin to contract and cement pops, creating havoc for many drivers. Hit a pothole just right and there's damage to vehicles. It's a result of a crumbling infrastructure. No matter what city you drive through, drivers have to be cautious and on the lookout for orange cones, detour signs, and workers who are constantly trying to repair and rebuild our nation's roads.

Since the creation of the Federal Aid Highway Act in 1956, America has spent billions of dollars to create a massive transit system across the nation. With the partnership between the federal government and local governments, highway construction changed and improved the lives of many Americans. It boosted the economy, by creating a system to transport goods across the country; it increased the employment market, by developing construction jobs for "tens of thousands of people," and it provided a way to for families to save money by moving outside the city limits (Arnesen). In essence, the past work initiated by the Eisenhower administration was instrumental in the lives of Americans. It changed the way we operated and lived, and it wasn't cheap. It took innovation, decades of hard labor, and billions of dollars. The challenges and benefits, though, were worth it.

But what about now? Sixty years later we are still trying to maintain an "old" infrastructure when we need to be thinking futuristic. U.S. Secretary of Transportation, Elaine Chao, states that "the infrastructure we all grew up with is aging. Technology—the great disruptor—is creating anew type of transport based on digital—not human—command and control." Chao is correct. The question becomes—are we ready for the future?

Already we see cars that are self-driving, drones that can deliver packages, and smart phones that can talk to one another. How we drive to work and how we take vacations—is about to change. So . . . what challenges do we face when it comes to our nation's transportation system?

How do we shift from the old to the new? According to Chao, there has to be not only a partnership between the federal government and state governments, but there also has to be partnerships created and fostered between tech giants and our government. There has to be shared ideas, shared information, and shared concerns for public safety (paragraph 15). That may be a challenge.

Another challenge will be financial. Federal governments and local governments cannot burden the cost alone. It will take investments from private industries to make sure that it won't take another 40 years to prepare a future that's already here and to ensure that future generations are "saddled" with massive debts that often trickle down to taxpayers (Chao, paragraph 18).

Let's face it. There are huge challenges ahead because of advancing technology. Yet, with cooperation and innovation and education, Americans can face those challenges. We can adapt. Our past proves it. We just need to take another step forward.

Organization	Content Development	Conventions
4	4	2

Notes

- **Organization**—focus strongly maintained; variety of transitional strategies; effective introduction and conclusion; logical progression; syntactic variety; smooth blending of narrative elements in introduction and argumentative (use of questions and claims) and expository (examples from sources)
- **Development**—comprehensive support is integrated, relevant, and specific to writer's own thoughts; precise language advances purpose and appeals to audience; source material used effectively and cited

English II Pre-Test Student Writing Samples
Sample 2

The great, long ribbon that connects our great land from coast to coast is, in my opinion one of our contry's greatest investments. With its use our country is connected like never before, instead of using rail lines or crowded ships we can now use the Interstate Highway System to get where we need to go. From a 10 minute drive to the next town to a 10 hour drive to the next state our interstate has many benefits, but pros always come with cons.

On one hand our great highway system, as mentioned before, connects our country in a convient way. This benefits us with faster travel, more citys and stores being developed, jobs being created, a way to exit quickly if needed, and so much more. However,as stated in the passage "Connecting the Country: The Interstate Highway System" there are also many downsides such as high gasoline consumption which contributes to air pollution, urban sprawl, destruction of lower income neighborhoods, more homeless because of the destruction of these neighborhoods, and amore.

I, however, still believe that our our highway system is till beneficial, and with the development of new technology our wonderful ribbon will become better, safer, and even more beneficial. As this new technology comes about we are seeing great changes like cars that will brake for you in case of emergency, cars that have a camera to help you see behind you so you don't ht anything while backing up. I think that these cameras are extremely beneficial.

Every Sunday when me and my family get out of church we face the same delima, "are there any small children behind the car that we can't see?" With this new technology we don't have to worry because we can see as we are backing up and the car will alert us my beeping if we get too close to something.

However, with all change we must change along with it. With the development of "self-driving" cars we must also update our highways to work with this new technology. In my opinion the cost is worth the reward. In the passage "Connecting the Country: The Interstate Highway System" it is stated that the original estimations of \$25 billion for construction, 40,000 miles of highway and over 12 years actually took 35 years, cost somewhere around \$114 billion and awarded us with 47,000 miles of highway. So I think the main problem is that people are afraid to stick future generatons with this debt, but with this original building the future generations were extremely grateful.

So in conclusion the Interstate Highway System was a huge benefit, and I believe that continuing to update and repair it will be too.

Organization	Content Development	Conventions
4	3	2

Notes

- **Organization**—controlling idea clear and maintained; consistently uses variety of transitions to clarify relationships; effective introduction with voice; adequate/weak closing; logical progression; syntactic variety; effectively blends argumentative (claims) and expository (examples)

- **Development—adequate support for controlling idea with some reasoned analysis; mix of precise and general language; adequately appeals to audience; heavy reliance on only one cited source**

English II Pre-Test Student Writing Samples
Sample 3

Transportation is a necessity. I believe that all people in 1st world countries would agree that without transportation our economy would crumble. We use transportation and road ways for travel, bringing in product, deporting products to other parts of the country, military action, and many other things that are of extreme importance to our way of life. However, transportation also has some negative effects on our environment, our safety, and our economy. I believe that there are ways to keep transportation at the forefront of our progress in America, but also limit the negative effects to our nation.

Dwight D. Eisenhower was the leader in creating effective roadways in this country. The article “Connecting the Country: The Interstate Highway System” by Eric Arnesen details the events that took place that led Eisenhower to the decision that roadways were of the utmost importance for our safety and our economy, not simply for being able to transport goods, but for also creating jobs that were needed to maintain the infrastructure itself. The creation of the interstate highway system revolutionized America. However, it did come with some downfalls in the long run. Some of those downfalls were pollution, congestion, and fatalities due to unsafe driving.

Several of these issues have started being remedied due to our enhancement of technology. The issue of pollution has been aided by the creation of electric vehicles and vehicles that rely on non-carbon based fuel sources. I believe that by continuing to create more vehicles that run on types of fuel that are less abrasive to the environment we can continue to prevent this negative effect of transportation. We have also seen many advancements of public transportation. This has encouraged many citizens to choose to not buy personal vehicles, but to use public transit therefore limiting the amount of pollution and congestion that would cause fatalities. U.S. Secretary of Transportation Elaine L. Chao stated at the U.S. Department of Transportation 50th Anniversary Open House on March 29, 2017 that one of the amazing transformations to the infrastructure was mass transit in urban areas. These areas were the original source of such pollution. By making mass transit more accessible and reliable, this has benefited the environment, the people, and the economy. I believe that supplying funding to increase accessibility to mass transit in as many areas as possible would be a great advancement for transportation as a whole.

By increasing citizens access to mass transit there will be less individual vehicles and drivers on the road ways. By limiting the highway drivers to only those that necessarily need to travel on their own or for long distances this would minimize congestion and in correlation with that, fatalities. Limiting congestion of having both commuters, long distance travelers, and shipping vehicles would benefit all in the area of safety on the highways.

Finally, when it comes to safety on the highways, technology can make a huge difference. If we are looking at limiting fatalities we must also focus on how we drive. Elaine L. Chao also made several points of how technology is changing and how that affects transportation as well. She said that “Self-driving cars and trucks will talk to each other – vehicle to vehicle communication – and keep a safe distance, reducing the number of highway fatalities.” By vehicles having added safety features the number of highway fatalities will drop. Personally, my vehicle has a light in the side mirror that shines orange if someone is in my blind spot. This new technology has made my driving even more safe. This personal experience shows me that by adding new safety technology to all vehicles our highways can be safer and our drivers can be more confident. Although transportation has brought its share of difficulties to our society, it has become an invaluable staple to our world. I believe that by implementing some much

needed improvement we could limit the negative aspects of pollution, highway congestion, and fatalities.

Organization	Content Development	Conventions
3	4	2

Notes

- **Organization**—controlling idea clear; uses transitions with some variety; adequate introduction and conclusion; ideas are connected and progress adequately; blending of argumentative (claims) and expository (examples) is purposeful
- **Development**—thorough and convincing support for controlling idea; precise language advances purpose and appeals to audience; source material used effectively and cited

English II Pre-Test Student Writing Samples
Sample 4

It has been said that “the more things change, the more they stay the same.” That still holds true. Over 50 years ago, there was a great need for infrastructure improvements; today, our country is still in need of an updated infrastructure system. Although the times have changed, the needs are still somewhat the same. While these needs look a little different today than they did 50 years ago, America still faces some of the old challenges.

After participating in a War Department project that involved moving army vehicles across the country, Dwight D. Eisenhower saw first-hand the struggles of transporting equipment and people over the unpaved American roads. Upon observing the German autobahn during World War II, he knew there had to be a better transportation system for the United States. Over 50 years ago, the now-President Eisenhower believed that constructing new highways could be “an important economic tool.” That belief certainly proved to be correct. Despite the lack of sufficient funding, over 47,000 miles of highway were created over a 35-year span. Jobs were created, safe transportation for people and goods was available, and economic growth was booming.

Although most Americans agreed that all of these changes were good for the citizens and the country, many critics believed that it was more destructive than helpful. Many complained the new highway system led to “air pollution, urban sprawl, and the destruction of low-income neighborhoods.” This, however, did not stop the ever-expanding system.

Today, America is still in need of new infrastructure, although the need is much different than 50 years ago. While the main method of travel is no longer by dirt roads, the current infrastructure can be seen as just as much of a struggle. Although this infrastructure has been the “backbone” of the country’s economy for the past 50 years, it is aging and is in need of replacement.

Unlike 50 years ago, those changes will involve growing technological improvements. Like 50 years ago, funding is still an issue. U.S. Secretary of Transportation Elaine Chao is concerned about paying for this new infrastructure without “saddling future generations with massive debt.” Such a large investment in technology will be extremely costly.

Although the initial investment will be large, the hopeful benefit of improved safety will be worth it. Additional benefits include new jobs, which will require new goals in education and skills training. Unfortunately, a drawback will be the impact of technology on current workers and jobs. Although some of the technology will require human interaction, most new jobs will require “higher skills and digital literacy.”

The goals have been the same for the past 50 years: safety and economic growth. Although the methods look a little different today than they did 50 years ago, it is safe to say that focusing on improving American infrastructure has led to many challenges, but has also produced many rewards.

Organization	Content Development	Conventions
3	3	2

Notes

- **Organization**—clear controlling idea; some variety in transitions to connect ideas; adequate introduction and conclusion; logical progression of ideas with some syntactic variety; very little blending—“claims” tend to be an expository summary of sources
- **Development**—convincing support for controlling idea but is mostly summaries/paraphrases from sources without original development of ideas; adequately appeals to audience; uses relevant and sufficient text from resources with attempts to cite

English II Pre-Test Student Writing Samples
Sample 5

A 17 year old girl just got her license, is jaming out in her car and going to school. Little does she now that the roads she is driving on were mainly created to get people to a safe place as fast as possible. These roads created more jobs when times were rough, they got people out of the city when bombs were threatened and became the “greatest public works in history” (connecting the highway).

Now to realize why this is a great thing for America, you need some background. Dwight D. Eisenhower noticed that during the Cold War there was a huge threat for americans to be bombed. Eisenhower decided that something needed to be done and created paved roads.

During the Cold War, it was hard to find jobs. Along with Eisenhower creating these roads, he developed jobs for thousands and thousands of people. Employment meant a better economy for America. It even grew hotels, gas stations , restaurants and many other corperations.

On March 29, 2017, the Department of Transportation held its 50th birthday. From the beginning to now, airports, mass transit and railroads have been built all over the world, allowing access to so many things. Now electronics and evolving cars are taking advantage of our everyday routien on the roads.

That 17 year old girl has no clue the importance of every road she has driven on. Weather its how many jobs it created or how many people they saved, the highways will always be a huge accomplishment in mankind.

Organization	Content Development	Conventions
2	2	2

Notes

- **Organization—focus insufficiently sustained; few or no transitional strategies; weak introduction and conclusion; uneven progression; attempt to blend narrative and expository**
- **Development—cursory support for controlling idea; simplistic language; limited use of available resources; attempts to cite sources**

English II Pre-Test Student Writing Samples
Sample 6

Ever since Eisenhower all the way to now has come a far way but it still has a few kinks. I was going down the highway and there was a crash. So the highway got backed up and no one could go anywhere. It lasted 5 hours before traffic finally picked up again. A few ways we can fix those kinks are increasing lanes, size of lane and safty on the highway.

The past of highways are dense they date back to 1939-1945 during WWII. In 1919, 81 vehicles and 282 members of military convoys had to take dirt roads because some paved roads were impassiable by the heavy veichles. Eishhower got the idea to make highways from germany's two-lane *autobahn* according to Eric Arnesen.

Fedral officials drafted repots in 1939 about toll roads and free roads and in 1944 interregional highways. Congress passed a federal-aid highway act in 1956. It gave \$25 billion for the construction of 40,000 miles worth of interstate.

Later in 1947-1991 during the cold war Eisenhower pushed highways being a national defense. The potienal of a nuclear war was feared so the federal government had to think and plan for a safe way to evacuate 70 million people according to Eric Arnesen.

After fifty years the U.S. Department of Transportation has done so much. Smart phones and drones were just science fiction not anymore. The U.S. Department of Transportation was first opened in April 1, 1967. Since then the infrastructure has made national highways, great airports, mass transit an urban staple, freight railroads popular again and ports became international and intermodal hubs. All these accomplishes is what gives are ecinomics a back bone. In the future there will be self driving cars, trucks, railroad cars, ships and planes. Drones are already inspecting agriculture, delivering packages and improving railway, pipeline and shipping safety according to Elaine L. Chao. Vehices are evolving and so are we. Eventually the Department of Transportation and technology will shape together and we the people will be prepared.

Organization	Content Development	Conventions
2	2	1

Notes

- **Organization—controlling idea insufficiently sustained/somewhat confusing; inconsistent use of transitions; weak introduction and closing; unclear connections among ideas; other than brief narrative in introduction, no evidence of blending**
- **Development—uneven, cursory support for controlling idea; support weakly integrated and predominantly copied; expression of ideas lacks clarity; attempts to appeal to audience; adequate use of resources; resources cited correctly**
- **Conventions—occasional run-on sentences; spelling and capitalization errors**

English II Pre-Test Student Writing Samples
Sample 7

The benefits of the construction of the U.S. highway system are great. It supplies jobs to millions of people, it provided transportation to ample number of different places, and it caused to be faster to travel cross country unlike before. But there were some bad things about this construction also. It did ravage an great amount nature and it did completely mess up some of natures ways like erosion and entire ecosystems. But I believe that the benefits, severely, outweigh the devastation.

Organization	Content Development	Conventions
2	1	1

Notes

- **Organization**—focus somewhat sustained; few transitional strategies; weak introduction/conclusion; no blending
- **Development**—little use of facts and details; mix of precise and general language; language attempts to appeal to audience; inadequate use of resources; does not cite
- **Conventions**—not enough correct text to balance out errors

English II Pre-Test Student Writing Samples
Sample 8

It was 1953, when the War started, my dad was leaving the house to go to war, when he got into the truck they were picking the soilders up in a tornado came through. Back then, the roads were not the best and people could not get help. My grandma, she lived with us at the time, had got hit will a tree branch and need some help but no one could help her. Back then the roads were unpaved and the cars could only go so fast. Theses cars have gotten better and no long take the time they needed to, to get somewhere. If roads were to have stayed the same and unpaved the world would be completely different.

Roads have changed and they have channged for the best. From the article Connecting the Country, most roads that existed were unpaved. With this they could not get to where they need top be obn time because the roads were not as good and paved. For the people that had to travel to go to war it took them longer than what it would take for people now adays. When there would be a natural desaeser, it would take rescues cruises longer because they roads we bad. Now if there were to be a natural disaeser then it would not take curises as long to get the the people.

Technology is one of the newest things to this century. According to U.S. Department of Transport, technology –the great disruptor—is creatinbg a new type of transport based on digital – not human – command and control. In the future, computers, not people, will be in the driver’s seat. With the new technology everyone is always wanting more. These self driving cars can be good but also could be very bad. These driverless cars could cause more accidents than ever before. There would not be a driver in the front seat it would be a computer that is going to be build into the car.

The roads have nnot just been taken over by new self driving cars but cell phones. There have been so many deaths in the past year alone that have happened because of cell phones. Yes, I have a cell phone, but when im driving my phone is put up just so I would not get on it. Cell phones are all most people think about when they are driving. Which does not make any sense, beacsue you have family that is at home waiting when you are coming home and if you are coming home safe. So, put the phone down and drive and actually care about what you are doing and not what is going on on snapchat or facebook.

Ifroads were to stay the same and unpaved the world would be completly different. All roads are not the safest but they are safer now than when they were not paved. But, roads are also really unsafe because you do not know what the other person could b doing in their car: texting, fighting, eating, etc... you can not always look out for what they are doing but you can always watch your safty. Self driving cars will not help out the world at all just cause more harm. Yes they are cool, but very dangerous.

Organization	Content Development	Conventions
1	2	1

Notes

- **Organization—controlling idea confusing; focus drifts; few transitional strategies; adequate introduction/weak conclusion; unclear progression (sounds forced); attempts to blend narrative and expository**

- **Development—minimal support; some copies; simplistic language; attempts to appeal to audience; inconsistently uses relevant text support from resources; minimal reasoned analysis; cites one source**
- **Conventions—large variety of spelling, capitalization, and punctuation errors**