

Tips for Success on the Gateway Exam

Subject Matter:

1. Read over both topic choices and their documents.
2. Pick the topic you know the most about or can explain the most using the documents. (development and knowledge)
3. Be sure to write only on one topic. (focus)
4. Evenly cover all the points/bullets listed in the question. (development)
5. Make clear connections between ideas and explain important relationships. (analysis and development)
6. Use both the documents and your own prior knowledge. (knowledge)

Language Arts:

7. Do some prewriting to get your ideas together before you start your essay.
8. Write a first draft and then recopy it as neatly as possible. (You do not have to double space.)
9. Try to find a creative way to open your essay. Quotes, questions, shocking statements, and interesting facts are always good options. (organization)
10. Make smooth transitions between paragraphs. (organization)
11. Provide a good conclusion that sums up your paper and leaves your reader with something to think about. (organization)
12. If they ask you to write a letter, use a letter format with a date, salutation, and farewell. (conventions)
13. Use interesting, precise vocabulary. Stay away from generic words and phrases (such as “something,” “stuff,” etc.) and slang. It is better to misspell a high-level vocabulary word than to use a word that is too simple or general. (fluency)
14. Mix up your sentences. Include long and short sentences; compound, complex, compound-complex, and simple sentences. Your sentence structure should not be choppy or repetitive. (fluency)
15. After you write your first draft, read it over and edit for spelling, grammar, etc. (conventions)
16. Be sure you have cited the documents you used. The graders will be looking for at least one parenthetical citation. (conventions)