

Prompt

As you read the passage below, consider how Paul Bogard uses

- evidence, such as facts or examples, to support claims.
- reasoning to develop ideas and to connect claims and evidence.
- stylistic or persuasive elements, such as word choice or appeals to emotion, to add power to the ideas expressed.

Adapted from Paul Bogard, “Let There Be Dark.” ©2012 by Los Angeles Times. Originally published December 21, 2012.

At my family’s cabin on a Minnesota lake, I knew woods so dark that my hands disappeared before my eyes. I knew night skies in which meteors left smoky trails across sugary spreads of stars. But now, when 8 of 10 children born in the United States will never know a sky dark enough for the Milky Way, I worry we are rapidly losing night’s natural darkness before realizing its worth. This winter solstice, as we cheer the days’ gradual movement back toward light, let us also remember the irreplaceable value of darkness.

All life evolved to the steady rhythm of bright days and dark nights. Today, though, when we feel the closeness of nightfall, we reach quickly for a light switch. And too little darkness, meaning too much artificial light at night, spells trouble for all.

Already the World Health Organization classifies working the night shift as a probable human carcinogen, and the American Medical Association has voiced its unanimous support for “light pollution reduction efforts and glare reduction efforts at both the national and state levels.” Our bodies need darkness to produce the hormone melatonin, which keeps certain cancers from developing, and our bodies need darkness for sleep. Sleep disorders have been linked to diabetes, obesity, cardiovascular disease and depression, and recent research suggests one main cause of “short sleep” is “long light.” Whether we work at night or simply take our tablets, notebooks and smartphones to bed, there isn’t a place for this much artificial light in our lives.

The rest of the world depends on darkness as well, including nocturnal and crepuscular species of birds, insects, mammals, fish and reptiles. Some examples are well known—the 400 species of birds that migrate at night in North America, the sea turtles that come ashore to lay their eggs—and some are not, such as the bats that save American farmers billions in pest control and the moths that pollinate 80% of the world's flora. Ecological light pollution is like the bulldozer of the night, wrecking habitat and disrupting ecosystems several billion years in the making. Simply put, without darkness, Earth's ecology would collapse....

In today's crowded, louder, more fast-paced world, night's darkness can provide solitude, quiet and stillness, qualities increasingly in short supply. Every religious tradition has considered darkness invaluable for a soulful life, and the chance to witness the universe has inspired artists, philosophers and everyday stargazers since time began. In a world awash with electric light...how would Van Gogh have given the world his "Starry Night"? Who knows what this vision of the night sky might inspire in each of us, in our children or grandchildren?

Yet all over the world, our nights are growing brighter. In the United States and Western Europe, the amount of light in the sky increases an average of about 6% every year. Computer images of the United States at night, based on NASA photographs, show that what was a very dark country as recently as the 1950s is now nearly covered with a blanket of light. Much of this light is wasted energy, which means wasted dollars. Those of us over 35 are perhaps among the last generation to have known truly dark nights. Even the northern lake where I was lucky to spend my summers has seen its darkness diminish.

It doesn't have to be this way. Light pollution is readily within our ability to solve, using new lighting technologies and shielding existing lights. Already, many cities and towns across North America and Europe are changing to LED streetlights, which offer dramatic possibilities for controlling wasted light. Other communities are finding success with simply turning off portions of their public lighting after midnight. Even Paris, the famed "city of light," which already turns off its monument lighting after 1 a.m., will this summer start to require its shops, offices and public buildings to turn off lights after 2 a.m. Though primarily designed to save energy, such reductions in light will also go far in

addressing light pollution. But we will never truly address the problem of light pollution until we become aware of the irreplaceable value and beauty of the darkness we are losing.

Write an essay in which you explain how Paul Bogard builds an argument to persuade his audience that natural darkness should be preserved. In your essay, analyze how Bogard uses one or more of the features in the directions that precede the passage (or features of your own choice) to strengthen the logic and persuasiveness of his argument. Be sure that your analysis focuses on the most relevant features of the passage.

Your essay should not explain whether you agree with Bogard’s claims, but rather explain how Bogard builds an argument to persuade his audience.

Sample Student Essays

Sample Student Essays

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Sample 1 Scores: 2 1 1

In “Let there be dark,” Paul Bogard talks about the importance of darkness.

Darkness is essential to humans. Bogard states, “Our bodies need darkness to produce the hormone melatonin, which keeps certain cancers from developing, and our bodies need darkness for sleep, sleep. Sleep disorders have been linked to diabetes, obesity, cardiovascular disease and depression and recent research suggests are main cause of “short sleep” is “long light.” Whether we work at night or simply take our tablets, notebooks and smartphones to bed, there isn’t a place for this much artificial light in our lives.” (Bogard 2). Here, Bogard talks about the importance of darkness to humans. Humans need darkness to sleep in order to be healthy.

Animals also need darkness. Bogard states, “The rest of the world depends on darkness as well, including nocturnal and crepuscular species of birds, insects, mammals, fish and reptiles. Some examples are well known—the 400 species of birds that migrate at night in North America, the sea turtles that come ashore to lay their eggs—and some are not, such as the bats that save American farmers billions in pest control and the moths that pollinate 80% of the world’s flora. Ecological light

pollution is like the bulldozer of the night, wrecking habitat and disrupting ecosystems several billion years in the making. Simply put, without darkness, Earth's ecology would collapse..." (Bogard 2). Here Bogard explains that animals, too, need darkness to survive.

This response scored a 2/1/1.

Reading—2: This response demonstrates some comprehension of Bogard's text. Although this essay consists almost entirely of two quotations taken directly from the passage, the writer does show an understanding of two of Bogard's main points—darkness is crucial to humans and to animals—by selecting and briefly summarizing two important lines of text. However, the writer demonstrates no deeper understanding of the passage's main ideas or important details. Overall, this response demonstrates partially successful reading comprehension.

Analysis—1: The response demonstrates no understanding of the analytical task. The writer does not attempt to analyze Bogard's use of evidence, reasoning, or stylistic or persuasive elements. Instead, the writer merely cites two sentences from the passage, and offers a brief restatement of each point. Overall, this paper demonstrates inadequate analysis.

Writing—1: This essay demonstrates little cohesion and inadequate skill in the use and control of language. The essay begins with a very broad central claim (*In "Let there be dark," Paul Bogard talks about the importance of darkness*) but otherwise lacks a recognizable introduction and conclusion. The writer's two main ideas are separated into two separate paragraphs, but because there is little original writing here, there is no clear evidence of the writer's ability to logically order or advance ideas. There is also little evidence of the writer's ability to vary sentence structure. Overall, this essay does not provide enough evidence of writing ability to warrant a score higher than a 1.

Sample 2 Scores: 2 1 1

Bogard builds an argument to persuade his audience about what he is concerning about and feels it important to take care about. His essay talks about so much facts about sleeping how so little can effect us health wise examples like getting sleep disorders, diabetes, obesity, cardiovascular disease and depression. This facts helps people persuade the audience he also say that the world health organization classifies working night shift is bad. In his argument is not all about how it bad for the body he also claims and have proof that light cost are expensive and really costing people because they have light all night long. He also claims light is messing with mother nature that animals need darkness to feed eat move around because there noctuaral creatures. He has details facts about human body, animals and about mother nature that he can use to support his idea of not using so much light at night and how we need darkness. With these features he can persuade the audience

because people don't know why darkness can be good for us. He was all of facts and examples that he claim is affecting us and there world.

This response scored a 2/1/1.

Reading—2: This response demonstrates some comprehension of the source text, although the writer's understanding of Bogard's central idea isn't conveyed until the latter part of the essay, where the writer indicates that Bogard includes *details facts about human body, animals and about mother nature that he can use to support his idea of not using so much light at night and how we need darkness*. Prior to this, the writer has included details from the text, but without contextualizing these details within Bogard's broader argument, suggesting that the writer is relaying ideas from the text without much understanding of how they contribute to the whole. For example, the writer mentions the health problems cited in the text, that working the night shift is classified as bad, and that light costs are high, but doesn't explain how these points relate to Bogard's main claim that we must preserve natural darkness. On the whole, this essay displays only a partial understanding of the source text.

Analysis—1: In this essay, the writer has merely identified aspects of Bogard's use of evidence without explaining how the evidence contributes to the argument. The writer notes that Bogard's text *talks about so much facts about sleeping how so little can effect us health wise examples like getting sleep disorders, diabetes, obesity, cardiovascular disease and depression. This facts helps people persuade the audience*. Other than identifying these as persuasive facts, however, the writer does nothing to indicate an understanding of the analytical task. The writer again mentions persuasion before the conclusion of the essay (*With these features he can persuade the audience because people don't know why darkness can be good for us*), but once again, there is no explanation of how or why these features are persuasive. Thus, the essay offers inadequate analysis of Bogard's text.

Writing—1: This response demonstrates little cohesion and inadequate skill in the use and control of language. From the outset, problems with language control impede the writer's ability to establish a clear central claim (*Bogard builds an argument to persuade his audience about what he is concernig about and feels it important to take care about*). The response also lacks a recognizable introduction and conclusion, and sentences are strung together without a clear progression of ideas (for much of the response, the writer merely lists claims Bogard makes). The response also lacks variety in sentence structures, in part because of repetitive transitions. (For example, *he also claims* is used two sentences in a row in this brief response). Weak control of the conventions of standard written English, coupled with vague word choice, undermine the quality of writing. Overall, this response has demonstrated inadequate writing skill.

Sample 3 Scores: 2 1 2

Paul Bogard builds a very persuasive argument to persuade his audience that natural darkness should be preserved. Bogard uses many features such as touch, feeling, seeing or even our own senses. Touching all of these features within Bogard's essay will make his argument stronger on whether natural darkness should be preserved.

One of the senses Bogard uses within his essay is touch. He concludes that many species depend on the darkness. I think that this is an important part to Bogard's essay because it is showing that not only humans depend on this. Darkness tends to evolve all over the world for a variety of things.

Another sense that Bogard uses is feeling. He compares the rhythm into which light and dark days exist. Many medical centers have concluded that our bodies need darkness to produce many different hormones and to continue with processes to keep us alive. Paul shows how many different characteristics affect how important darkness is to a human body.

In Bogard's essay he talks about many different religious traditions that value darkness. I think that this topic Bogard uses appeals to emotion to many different religious groups. Giving evidence of a historical artist Van Gogh adds a lot of emotion to this particular essay.

In Bogard's essay he provides information about technologies that are determining different light fixtures. Comparing how cities and towns across the world are changing their ways of light is going to be wasted.

I think that Bogard's essay is particularly strong. He uses a lot of evidence with emotion. Providing a variety of different examples on how darkness should be preserved gives a lot of power to the ideas that are expressed.

This response scored a 2/1/2.

Reading—2: This response demonstrates some understanding of the source text. The writer captures Bogard's central claim by repeating the prompt's summary statement about the importance of preserving natural darkness and conveys understanding of a few details from the text: *many species depend on darkness, our bodies need darkness to produce many different hormones, different religious traditions value darkness, and cities and towns across the world are changing their ways of light*. However, whenever the writer moves beyond phrasings taken directly from the passage and attempts to summarize a point Bogard has made, the interpretation is often unclear or inaccurate (*Darkness tends to evolve all over the world for a variety of things; In Bogard's essay he provides information about technologies that are determining different light fixtures*). Overall, this essay demonstrates only partial comprehension of Bogard's argument.

Analysis—1: This writer provides a limited analysis of the source text. The writer identifies Bogard’s use of *touch, feeling, seeing or even our own senses* as aspects that build Bogard’s argument. However, the writer is unable to express how Bogard uses these elements specifically. For example, in the first paragraph, the writer claims that *One of the senses Bogard uses within his essay is touch*, but none of the ensuing discussion relates to touch at all. Instead, the writer merely goes on to summarize that Bogard *concludes that many species depend on the darkness*. In the third paragraph, the writer sets out to address Bogard’s use of *feeling*, but again, the analysis is not clearly relevant; nor does the writer clearly explain how the examples cited from Bogard’s text relate to “feeling.” In the fourth paragraph, the writer appropriately identifies Bogard’s use of emotion to build his argument, but the discussion doesn’t extend beyond identification: *I think that this topic Bogard uses appeals to emotion to many different religious groups. Giving evidence of a historical artist Van Gogh adds a lot of emotion to this particular essay*. The writer seems to have a sense of the form that analysis should take, but this response demonstrates ineffective analysis overall.

Writing—2: This response demonstrates limited cohesion and skill in the use and control of language. The writer has provided a skeletal organizational structure for the essay, with a brief introduction that sets up the writer’s central claim, and paragraphs that roughly follow the order of the points the writer intends to discuss: *Bogard uses many features such as touch, feeling, seeing or even our own senses*. However, the essay lacks a progression of ideas within paragraphs; instead, ideas are disconnected from one another, so although the essay has the appearance of being ordered into logical paragraphs, the actual content of those paragraphs does not demonstrate cohesion (*In Bogard’s essay he provides information about technologies that are determining different light fixtures. Comparing how cities and towns across the world are changing thier ways of light is going to be wasted*). In this essay, organization and language errors (such as syntactically awkward sentences and sentence fragments) detract from the quality of the writing and often impede understanding, leading to a score of 2.

Sample 4 Scores: 2 2 2

In Paul Bogard’s essay “Let there be Dark” he emphasizes the importance of natural darkness. Bogard begins his argument by first providing a story from his personal experience, appealing to the reader by adding imagery. “I knew night skies in which meteors left smoky trails across sugary spreads of stars.” In this sentence, Bogard depicts the beauty of natural darkness using detail. Bogard continues with comparing his personal perspective of natural darkness in the past to society’s perspective in the present. “Today, though, when we feel the closeness of night fall, we reach quickly for a light switch.” Implying that the times have definitely changed and natural darkness’s value has been lost in society, replaced with artificial light. This example gives Bogard a sense of voice and his use of comparison is definitely effective.

Bogard supports his claims about natural darkness's underrated value by providing the reader with evidence of health problems that the opposite replacement, artificial light, can cause. "Our bodies need darkness to produce the hormone melatonin, which keeps certain cancers from developing." Oh, no! Not cancer! Right there is a quick attention grabber to any reader previously bored by Bogard's constant opinions because now there are facts, and a fact relating to the reader is the best persuasion, especially when it relates to their health or well-being. Cancer, because who wants a terminal illness over an action as simple as flipping a switch on a night light when it's too dark for your comfort?

This response scored a 2/2/2.

Reading—2: This writer demonstrates some comprehension of the passage. In the first paragraph, the writer conveys the passage's broad central point—the *importance of natural darkness*. The writer also shows an understanding of the comparison Bogard draws between his own past and the present day (*the times have definitely changed and natural darkness's value has been lost in society, replaced with artificial light*). In the paragraph that follows, the writer briefly cites Bogard's point about the negative health implications of too much artificial light. However, this is the last evidence of understanding the writer provides, as the essay ends almost immediately afterward. Overall, the writer has demonstrated partial understanding of the source text.

Analysis—2: The response offers some limited analysis of the source text, demonstrating partial understanding of the analytical task. The writer identifies Bogard's use of *imagery* in the story of meteors in the night sky and then asserts that this imagery appeals to reader, but the writer offers no further discussion of Bogard's use of imagery or how imagery contributes to his argument. The writer also refers to the comparison Bogard makes between his youth and current times and says that the comparison gives Bogard a *sense of voice*, but the writer doesn't explain why this comparison contributes to an authorial voice or how establishing a particular voice serves Bogard's argument. The writer offers one additional point of analysis, asserting that Bogard's reference to cancer is a *quick attention grabber* and that the use of a *fact relating to the reader is the best persuasion, especially when it relates to their health or well-being*. However, the writer does not elaborate on this point. In each instance of analysis in this short response, the writer identifies the use of evidence or rhetorical features, but asserts rather than explains the importance of those elements. Overall, this response demonstrates partially successful analysis.

Writing—2: This response demonstrates limited cohesion and some skill in the use of language. Although the writer offers a central claim that guides the essay, there is no indication of an introduction or conclusion to frame ideas. Overall, sentences are clear and the writer generally observes the conventions of standard written English. However, by the end of this short response,

the writer has deviated from a formal style and objective tone (*Oh, no! Not cancer! Right there is a quick attention grabber to any reader previously bored by Bogard's constant opinions*). The essay abruptly concludes with a rhetorical question that also somewhat strays from a formal tone (*Cancer, because who wants a terminal illness over an action as simple as flipping a switch on a night light when it's too dark for your comfort?*). On the whole, this response offers some evidence of cohesion and control of language.

Sample 5 Scores: 3 3 3

In Paul Bogard's article "Let there be dark" he's building an argument to persuade his audience to preserve natural darkness. Bogard builds his argument in a few different ways. Bogard uses a personal story, appeals to people's emotions, and states benefits of natural darkness.

By using a personal story Bogard allows his audience to connect to him. If his audience can relate or even understand his story they will be more willing to agree with him. The personal story also shows that the issue of preserving natural darkness isn't just another topic to write about but something that he is actually passionate for. In his personal story Bogard uses great imagery making the audience picture what he saw and maybe make them want to experience it too.

Bogard uses pathos by stating examples that appeal to people's emotions. In the article he wrote "Those of us over 35 are perhaps among the last generation to have known truly dark nights." This statement appeals more to the younger generations emotion. By stating this people who are younger than 35 might feel that they were robbed of the opportunity to experience the real beauty of natural darkness. This would probably help his younger audience to agree with him because they might want the chance to see the real beauty of natural darkness.

Bogard writes about the benefits that natural darkness actually produces. In the article he talks about how darkness actually helps the body produce a hormone that keeps certain cancers from developing. He also includes how darkness helps and is necessary for certain animals. These examples will help his audience see that he is arguing for something beneficial for people. This also helps appeal to an audience that might not care for the beauty of darkness but care for their own personal health.

Bogard uses different features in order to persuade his audience. The different features also help him in appealing to a broader audience.

This response scored a 3/3/3.

Reading—3: This response demonstrates effective understanding of the passage, with increasing evidence as the response continues. In the second paragraph, the writer discusses the personal experience of the night sky that Bogard draws on; although the writer does not recount the experience itself, it is nevertheless clear that the writer understands the story of Bogard's youth. In the next paragraph, the writer cites and discusses a generational claim that Bogard makes, again demonstrating comprehension. Finally, the writer discusses general points Bogard makes about darkness's usefulness for both animals and humans, although again, the writer makes a vague reference *that darkness helps and is necessary for certain animals* without offering any of specific textual examples that Bogard provides. However, across the whole of this essay, the writer demonstrates effective understanding of the text's central idea (*he's building an argument to persuade his audience to preserve natural darkness*) and important details.

Analysis—3: The writer demonstrates an understanding of the analytical task by first identifying three ways Bogard builds his argument (*Bogard uses a personal story, appeals to people's emotions, and states benefits of natural darkness*) and then developing each point in turn. In the response's body paragraphs, the writer moves beyond mere assertions to a competent evaluation of how pieces of evidence, reasoning, or stylistic or persuasive elements contribute to the argument. For example, in the response's discussion of the personal story Bogard opens with, the writer argues not only that the story *allows his audience to connect to him* but also explains the importance of such connection (*If his audience can relate or even understand his story they will be more willing to agree with him*). The writer also contends that the use of this personal story shows Bogard's passion and that the imagery included in the story makes *the audience picture what he saw and maybe make them want to experience it too*. The response could have made a stronger point had the writer elaborated on the potential effects of making the audience want to share Bogard's experience. Nevertheless, in this example and others like it in the response, the writer exhibits effective analysis of the source text using relevant and sufficient support.

Writing—3: This essay is mostly cohesive and demonstrates mostly effective control of language. The brief introduction establishes the writer's central idea and sets up the essay's three points. The essay then follows a clear, if formulaic, format. In each paragraph, the writer demonstrates a progression of ideas, integrating quotations or examples from the source text into the analysis and connecting ideas logically (*Bogard uses pathos by stating examples that appeal to people's emotions. In the article he wrote "Those of us over 35 are perhaps among the last generation to have known truly dark nights." This statement appeals more to the younger generations emotion. By stating this...*). Sentence structure is varied, and some precise phrasing is used to convey ideas (*robbed of the opportunity, their own personal health*). Language control on the whole is good, although there are a few minor errors (*These examples will help his audience see that he is arguing*

for some beneficial for people) that do not detract materially from the quality of writing. Overall, the response demonstrates proficient writing.

Sample 6 Scores: 4 1 3

Paul Bogard strongly believes that natural darkness should be preserved. In order to prove the need for natural darkness, Bogard divides his argument into three main topics, saying that natural darkness is beneficial to humans, essential to humans, and essential to ecosystems.

According to Bogard, natural darkness can be a positive help to humans. One of the ways it can accomplish this is by giving enjoyment to onlookers. To supplant this, Bogard gives a personal example of how he enjoyed seeing meteors dart across the night sky in Minnesota as a child. Also he states that natural darkness can be a source of solitude. Supporting this claim, Bogard states that darkness is invaluable to every religion. Additionally Bogard says that the night sky has inspired countless numbers of philosophers, artists, and stargazers for millennia. He then gives an appealing allusion by asking how Van Gogh could have painted “Starry Night” in the mist of electric light. One of Bogard’s primary arguments for natural darkness shows how it can benefit humans.

Bogard then gives a scientific case that shows why natural darkness is essential to humans. He states a find of the World Health Organization that declares the night shift can be detrimental to one’s health. He points to the necessity of darkness in producing melatonin, a hormone that helps prevent certain cancers from developing in the human body. Bogard then concludes his argument that darkness is essential to human well-being by analyzing sleep. He first makes the obvious claim that darkness is essential for sleep. Then, he talks about the negative health effects of sleep disorders.; these include “diabetes, obesity, cardiovascular disease and depression.” To associate this with his argument for natural darkness, Bogard states the findings of recent research, which say that “long light” is one of the primary causes of “short sleep.” Bogard uses scientific evidence to support his belief in the preservation of natural darkness.

Bogard’s third primary defense of natural darkness declares that it is essential to nature. He notes that there are a variety of nocturnal and crepuscular species of birds, fish, mammals, insects, and reptiles worldwide. He gives two specific, well-known examples of these species; these discussed the 400 species of North American birds that migrate at night and the sea turtles that lay their eggs on the shore at night. He also gives a couple of lesser-known examples, involving bats and moths that show the positive actions that some nocturnal animals perform. He then concludes his argument for nocturnal darkness necessary to nature with persuasion, saying that removing natural darkness would essentially destroy an ecology that took billions of years to develop. Here, Bogard uses scientific fact to prove that natural darkness is a key to nature and ecology. Paul Bogard supports

the preservation of natural darkness. He uses an argument to support his position that has three primary points—benefit to humans, need for humans and need for nature.

This response scored a 4/1/3.

Reading—4: This response demonstrates thorough comprehension of Bogard's text and a clear understanding of the interrelation between the central idea and important details. The writer briefly summarizes Bogard's central idea (*natural darkness should be preserved*) and aptly notes that Bogard's argument encompasses three main points: *that natural darkness is beneficial to humans, essential to humans, and essential to ecosystems*. The writer provides various details from the text that support these points. In the first body paragraph, for example, the writer demonstrates comprehension of how Bogard's *personal example of how he enjoyed seeing meteors dart across the night sky in Minnesota as a child* relates to his claim that natural darkness can give *enjoyment to onlookers*. The writer also sees the connection between darkness as *a source of solitude* and it inspiring *countless numbers of philosophers, artists, and stargazers for millennia*. Providing these details highlights the writer's understanding of Bogard's claim that natural darkness *can benefit humans*. The writer continues to demonstrate how details in Bogard's text relate to each other and to his central idea in the subsequent discussion of how darkness is essential to humans' health and to nature. Although little is directly quoted from the text, the writer's thorough paraphrasing of multiple details taken from across the passage indicates that the writer comprehensively understands Bogard's argument and is able to convey it in his own words.

Analysis—1: The response offers ineffective analysis of Bogard's text and demonstrates little understanding of the analytical task. Although clearly comprehending the entirety of Bogard's argument, the writer does not communicate how Bogard builds his argument with evidence, reasoning, or stylistic or persuasive elements, nor does the writer communicate what effect Bogard's argumentation has on his audience. Instead of providing effective analysis, the writer only identifies argumentative elements in Bogard's text, such as the *appealing allusion* Bogard offers regarding Van Gogh's *Starry Night* or the *scientific evidence* Bogard uses to *support his belief in the preservation of natural darkness*. The writer instead consistently lapses into summary. Overall, the response demonstrates inadequate analysis.

Writing—3: This mostly cohesive response demonstrates effective use and control of language. The writer presents an effective introduction with a clear central claim that lays out the three points discussed in the response (*In order to prove the need for natural darkness, Bogard divides his argument into three main topics, saying that natural darkness is beneficial to humans, essential to humans, and essential to the ecosystem*). The response also includes an generally effective conclusion that summarizes rather than advances the essay (*Paul Bogard supports the preservation*

of natural darkness. He uses an argument to support his position that has three primary points—benefit to humans, need for humans and need for nature) although the conclusion is not marked off by a paragraph break. The response is organized clearly around the three points identified in the introduction, and each body paragraph stays on-topic. The writer also demonstrates a clear progression of ideas both within paragraphs and throughout the essay. Sentence structure tends to be repetitive and simple, however. For example, at or near the end of each body paragraph, the writer restates the point that introduces that paragraph (*Bogard then gives a scientific case that shows why natural darkness is essential to humans.... Bogard uses scientific evidence to support his belief in the preservation of natural darkness*). Although the writing in this response is proficient, it does not demonstrate the sentence variety, precise word choice, or highly effective progression of ideas that is expected at the advanced level.

Sample 7 Scores: 4 3 4

Paul Bogard, a respected and passionate writer, offers a convincing argument on the importance of allowing more darkness to fill the earth for distinct health and ecological reasons. With light providing as such a huge factor in daily life, we sometimes forget that darkness can have more healing abilities, and allows nature to return to a nonartificial, primitive state. Bogard uses personal observation for credibility, stirring feelings, and startling facts to deliver a powerful argument.

Throughout the passage, Bogard remains nostalgic about his childhood: “At my family’s cabin on a Minnesota lake, I knew woods so dark that my hands disappeared before my eyes. I knew night skies in which meteors left smoky trails across sugary spreads of stars....This winter solstice, as we cheer the days’ gradual movement back toward light, let us also remember the irreplaceable value of darkness.” The description of nature and the stunningly beautiful imagery creates a feeling of deep respect for the darkness. We share in Bogard’s view and as a result, Bogard has undeniable credibility. Bogard knows the power of darkness and through his childhood memories, we lean our ears to listen to him.

Even though credibility makes many appearances throughout the passage, it would have no real meaning without evoking emotion. Bogard strikes the people who disagree with him when he says, “Our bodies need darkness to produce the hormone melatonin, which keeps certain cancers from developing and our bodies need darkness for sleep. Sleep disorders have been linked to diabetes, obesity, cardiovascular disease and depression, and recent research suggests one main cause of ‘short sleep’ is ‘long light’.” Bogard’s statement dissolves any doubt, but builds up new feeling. We finally see the true importance of allowing our world to temporarily succumb to darkness. Through the emotion Bogard evokes, we suddenly feel defensive in preserving the darkness for the sake of our mental and physical health. Bogard even makes us think about the future generations: “In a

world awash with electric light...how would Van Gogh have given the world his 'starry night'? Who knows what this vision of the night sky must inspire in each of us, in our children or grandchildren?"

In order to achieve proper credibility and stir emotion, undeniable facts must reside in passage. Bogard has completed his research, and uses it to further his case: "The rest of the world depends on darkness as well, including nocturnal and crepuscular species of birds, insects, mammals, fish, and reptiles. Some examples are well known—the 400 species of birds that migrate at night in North America, the sea turtles that come to lay their eggs—and some are not, such as the bats that save American farmers billions in pest control and the moths that pollinate 80% of the world's flora." Using the facts about animals, Bogard extends the argument beyond humans, allowing us to see that darkness does not only have an impact on us, but all of nature. Bogard then says, "In the United States and Western Europe, the amount of light in the sky increases an average of about 6% every year.... Much of this light is wasted energy, which means wasted dollars. Those of us over 35 are perhaps among the last generation to have known truly dark nights." However, Bogard extends the facts to offer various solutions to wasted and excessive light, such as changing LED streetlights and reducing the use of lights in public buildings and homes during the night. Bogard builds up our world, and then breaks it down in our minds with his writing: "Simply put, without darkness, Earth's ecology would collapse...."

We can still save our world according to Bogard. We must see the strength and beauty in the darkness, and remember how our world survived without lights. Light can be acceptable, but too much of it can prove worse than permanent darkness.

This response scored a 4/3/4.

Reading—4: This response demonstrates thorough comprehension of Bogard's text. The writer captures the central idea of the source passage (*the importance of allowing more darkness to fill the earth for distinct health and ecological reasons*) and accurately quotes and paraphrases many important details from the passage. Moreover, the writer demonstrates an understanding of how these ideas and details interrelate. In the third body paragraph, for example, the writer shows the movement of Bogard's argument from humans to animals and from problems to solutions (*Using facts about animals, Bogard extends the argument beyond humans... Bogard extends the facts to offer various solutions*). The response is free of errors of fact and interpretation. Overall, this response demonstrates advanced reading comprehension.

Analysis—3: The writer demonstrates an understanding of the analytical task by analyzing three ways Bogard builds his argument (*personal observation for credibility, stirring feelings, and startling facts to deliver a powerful argument*). Throughout the response, the writer discusses Bogard's use of

these three elements and is able to move past asserting their significance to deliver an effective analysis of the effects of these techniques on Bogard's audience. Effective analysis is evident in the first body paragraph in which the writer discusses the audience's possible reaction to reading about Bogard's experience with darkness as a child (*Bogard knows the power of darkness and through his childhood memories, we lean our ears to listen to him*). In the second body paragraph, the writer contends that *Bogard's statement dissolves any doubt, but builds up new feeling. We finally see the true importance of allowing our world to temporarily succumb to darkness. Through the emotion Bogard evokes, we suddenly feel defensive in preserving the darkness for the sake of our mental and physical health*. These points of analysis would have been stronger had the writer elaborated on how they work to build Bogard's argument. However, the writer competently evaluates Bogard's use of personal observation, emotions, and facts and provides relevant and sufficient support for each claim, demonstrating effective analysis.

Writing—4: The writer demonstrates highly effective use and command of language in this cohesive response. The response includes a precise central claim (*Bogard uses personal observation for credibility, stirring feelings, and startling facts to deliver a powerful argument*), and each of the subsequent paragraphs remains focused on one of the topics set forth in that central claim. There is a deliberate progression of ideas both within paragraphs and throughout the response. Moreover, the response demonstrates precise word choice and sophisticated turns of phrase (*temporarily succumb to darkness, remains nostalgic about his childhood, dissolves any doubt*). The concluding paragraph develops the essay rather than just restating what has been said and is also successful for its precise word choice and complex sentence structures (*We must see the strength and beauty in the darkness, and remember how our world survived without lights. Light can be acceptable, but too much of it can prove worse than permanent darkness*). Although there are occasional missteps where the writer overreaches with language (*In order to achieve proper credibility and stir emotion, undeniable facts must reside in the passage*), overall, this response demonstrates advanced writing skill.

Sample 8 scores: 4 4 4

In response to our world's growing reliance on artificial light, writer Paul Bogard argues that natural darkness should be preserved in his article "Let There be dark". He effectively builds his argument by using a personal anecdote, allusions to art and history, and rhetorical questions.

Bogard starts his article off by recounting a personal story – a summer spent on a Minnesota lake where there was "woods so dark that [his] hands disappeared before [his] eyes." In telling this brief anecdote, Bogard challenges the audience to remember a time where they could fully amass themselves in natural darkness void of artificial light. By drawing in his readers with a personal

encounter about night darkness, the author means to establish the potential for beauty, glamour, and awe-inspiring mystery that genuine darkness can possess. He builds his argument for the preservation of natural darkness by reminiscing for his readers a first-hand encounter that proves the “irreplaceable value of darkness.” This anecdote provides a baseline of sorts for readers to find credence with the author’s claims.

Bogard’s argument is also furthered by his use of allusion to art – Van Gogh’s “Starry Night” – and modern history – Paris’ reputation as “The City of Light”. By first referencing “Starry Night”, a painting generally considered to be undoubtedly beautiful, Bogard establishes that the natural magnificence of stars in a dark sky is definite. A world absent of excess artificial light could potentially hold the key to a grand, glorious night sky like Van Gogh’s according to the writer. This urges the readers to weigh the disadvantages of our world consumed by unnatural, vapid lighting. Furthermore, Bogard’s alludes to Paris as “the famed ‘city of light’”. He then goes on to state how Paris has taken steps to exercise more sustainable lighting practices. By doing this, Bogard creates a dichotomy between Paris’ traditionally alluded-to name and the reality of what Paris is becoming – no longer “the city of light”, but moreso “the city of light...before 2 AM”. This furthers his line of argumentation because it shows how steps can be and are being taken to preserve natural darkness. It shows that even a city that is literally famous for being constantly lit can practically address light pollution in a manner that preserves the beauty of both the city itself and the universe as a whole.

Finally, Bogard makes subtle yet efficient use of rhetorical questioning to persuade his audience that natural darkness preservation is essential. He asks the readers to consider “what the vision of the night sky might inspire in each of us, in our children or grandchildren?” in a way that brutally plays to each of our emotions. By asking this question, Bogard draws out heartfelt ponderance from his readers about the affecting power of an untainted night sky. This rhetorical question tugs at the readers’ heartstrings; while the reader may have seen an unobscured night skyline before, the possibility that their child or grandchild will never get the chance sways them to see as Bogard sees. This strategy is definitively an appeal to pathos, forcing the audience to directly face an emotionally-charged inquiry that will surely spur some kind of response. By doing this, Bogard develops his argument, adding gutthral power to the idea that the issue of maintaining natural darkness is relevant and multifaceted.

Writing as a reaction to his disappointment that artificial light has largely permeated the prescence of natural darkness, Paul Bogard argues that we must preserve true, unaffected darkness. He builds this claim by making use of a personal anecdote, allusions, and rhetorical questioning.

This response scored a 4/4/4.

Reading—4: This response demonstrates thorough comprehension of the source text through skillful use of paraphrases and direct quotations. The writer briefly summarizes the central idea of Bogard's piece (*natural darkness should be preserved; we must preserve true, unaffected darkness*), and presents many details from the text, such as referring to the personal anecdote that opens the passage and citing Bogard's use of *Paris' reputation as "The City of Light."* There are few long direct quotations from the source text; instead, the response succinctly and accurately captures the entirety of Bogard's argument in the writer's own words, and the writer is able to articulate how details in the source text interrelate with Bogard's central claim. The response is also free of errors of fact or interpretation. Overall, the response demonstrates advanced reading comprehension.

Analysis—4: This response offers an insightful analysis of the source text and demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of the analytical task. In analyzing Bogard's use of *personal anecdote, allusions to art and history, and rhetorical questions*, the writer is able to explain carefully and thoroughly how Bogard builds his argument over the course of the passage. For example, the writer offers a possible reason for why Bogard chose to open his argument with a personal anecdote, and is also able to describe the overall effect of that choice on his audience (*In telling this brief anecdote, Bogard challenges the audience to remember a time where they could fully amass themselves in natural darkness void of artificial light. By drawing in his readers with a personal encounter...the author means to establish the potential for beauty, glamour, and awe-inspiring mystery that genuine darkness can possess.... This anecdote provides a baseline of sorts for readers to find credence with the author's claims*). The cogent chain of reasoning indicates an understanding of the overall effect of Bogard's personal narrative both in terms of its function in the passage and how it affects his audience. This type of insightful analysis is evident throughout the response and indicates advanced analytical skill.

Writing—4: The response is cohesive and demonstrates highly effective use and command of language. The response contains a precise central claim (*He effectively builds his argument by using personal anecdote, allusions to art and history, and rhetorical questions*), and the body paragraphs are tightly focused on those three elements of Bogard's text. There is a clear, deliberate progression of ideas within paragraphs and throughout the response. The writer's brief introduction and conclusion are skillfully written and encapsulate the main ideas of Bogard's piece as well as the overall structure of the writer's analysis. There is a consistent use of both precise word choice and well-chosen turns of phrase (*the natural magnificence of stars in a dark sky is definite, our world consumed by unnatural, vapid lighting, the affecting power of an untainted night sky*). Moreover, the response features a wide variety in sentence structure and many examples of sophisticated sentences (*By doing this, Bogard creates a dichotomy between Paris' traditionally alluded-to name and the reality of what Paris is becoming – no longer "the city of light", but moreso "the city of*

light...before 2AM”). The response demonstrates a strong command of the conventions of written English. Overall, the response exemplifies advanced writing proficiency.

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