Summary of TASC Writing Item Specifications

Emphasis	Standard	Sample Questions	High Utility Teaching Practices/ Resources
High	Write an effective on-demand argumentative essay on a given topic	Write an argumentative essay in which you argue for or against a free library system, drawing on information in two stimulus texts	Best Practices for Teaching the TASC Argumentative Essay: Frequent (once per week) in class essay writing Model essay with questions Templates and sentence starters Look at simplified scoring rubric Resources: --ELA/SS CUNY HSE Curriculum Framework, Lesson 5 --See also the "Show Me the Money" and "Elections" curricula -- *Writers Write: 8 Informational Essays for the TASC* on http://CollectEdNY.org
High	Write an effective on-demand informational essay on a given topic	Write an informational essay on high school students in the workforce, making use of information in two stimulus texts	Resources: --Look at the "Show me the Money" and "Elections" curricula for models for the informational essay -- *Writers Write: 8 Informational Essays for the TASC* on http://CollectEdNY.org
High	Choose language that expresses ideas concisely, eliminating wordiness and redundancy	Read the sentence. Which revision combines the ideas without redundancy? Read the paragraph. Which revision of the sentences expresses the ideas most clearly and precisely?	Best Practices for Teaching to the TASC Multiple Choice Writing Exam: Sentence Combining Resources and Lesson Plans: --"Sentence Combining for HSE Students" on cuny dropbox under "TASC Writing" --ELA/SS CUNY HSE Curriculum Framework --OWL website
High	Use punctuation (commas, ellipses, parentheses, dashes) to indicate a pause or break to set off parenthetical elements	Which sentence uses commas correctly? Which sentence correctly uses dashes to indicate a pause or break?	Best Practices for Teaching to the TASC Multiple Choice Writing Exam: --Teach sentence combining, beginning with the simplest concepts first--i.e. a sentence is made up of a subject and a verb—and gradually introducing more

			complex forms --Teach punctuation in the context of sentence combining work --Use sentence stems related to science and social studies content you've been teaching so content is reinforced. <u>Resources:</u> --OWL website --Grammarbytes website --See also Review Packets for "Show Me the Money" and "Election" curricula
High	Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb voice (active/passive) and mood (question, statement, conditional)	Which revision most effectively uses active/passive voice? Which revision creates a consistent voice? Choose the revision in which the mood of the verbs correctly matches the rest of the paragraph	<u>Resources:</u> --OWL
High	Use parallel structure (sentences that connect ideas with FANBOYS; compared and contrasted ideas (more for its style than for is ideas (noun and noun)); when using both, either/or, neither/nor; not only; but (also)	Which revision correctly uses parallel structure?	<u>Resources:</u> --OWL --Grammar Bytes --Selected lessons in the "Show me the Money" and "Civil War/Reconstruction" curriculum
Medium	Vary sentence patterns for meaning and style to make the meaning clearer or strengthen stylistic effect	In which revision is the point stated clearly and directly? Which revision states the ideas most effectively for the stated audience?	Sentence combining <u>Resources</u> -"Sentence Combining for HSE Students" on cuny dropbox under "TASC Writing" --Lessons on the CUNY HSE Curriculum Framework --CUNY TASC curricula such as Show me the Money and Civil War/Reconstruction
Medium	Use different phrase types and clause types (dependent/independent)	Which revision best clarifies the relationship between ideas? Which revision adds variety or interest?	Sentence combining— <u>Resources</u> "Sentence Combining for HSE Students" on cuny dropbox under "TASC Writing" --CUNY HSE Curriculum Framework SS/ELA lessons

			--TASC curricula such as "Civil War/Reconstruction" and "Show me the Money"
Medium	Use a semi-colon to link two or more closely related independent clauses	Which sentence uses a semi-colon correctly? Which sentence is correctly punctuated?	Teach semi-colon use through sentence combining as one way to connect two independent clauses See resources cited above
Medium	Use a colon to introduce a list or quotation	Which sentence correctly uses a colon? Which punctuation mark belongs in the blank?	Teach the colon in the context of sentence combining See resources cited above
Low	Identify or write an effective claim	Which revision most improves the clarity of the essay's central claim? Which supporting sentence best supports a claim made in the paragraph?	
Low	Evaluate claims and counterclaims	Which revision best presents a balanced viewpoint? Which sentence should the writer add to support his claim?	
Low	Introduce a topic, develop a topic, or provide a concluding statement	Which revision best improves the organization of the ideas? Which order of ideas is most effective/clear/logical? Which revision best clarifies its relationship to the preceding sentence?	
Low	Use precise vocabulary	Which revision best clarifies the central idea using precise language? Which revisions best improve precise word choice?	
Low	Distinguish between question, statement, conditional, command	Which revision expresses the idea as a fact? Which revision is stated to express uncertainty? Which revision expresses an imperative?	
Low	Maintain consistency in style or tone	Which revision maintains a tone consistent with the rest of the letter?	
Low	Establish and maintain a formal and objective tone	Which revision establishes a more objective tone/formal style?	