**The Constructed Response and the Summary Response Essay**

**What is Constructed Response?**

* Assessment items that ask students to apply knowledge, skills and critical thinking abilities to real-world, standards-driven performance tasks.
* Constructed responses require students to "construct" or develop their own answers without the benefit of any suggestions or choices.  Students generate and intertwine their ideas into a response that is directly related to the item.  Students generate a response in the form of a few sentences, a graphic organizer, or a simple drawing/diagram with explanation.
* Constructed responses can be either short or extended

**A.  Constructed response questions:**

* Are open ended, short answer questions that measure application-level cognitive skills as well as content knowledge. No opinion questions.
* Use a range of primary and secondary stimuli and authentic "real world" examples including time lines, maps, graphs, cartoons, charts, and short readings.
* Are graded against specific criterion (employ a scoring **rubric**).

**B. Constructed response questions should be based on a given stimulus and include a series of questions which build from simple to complex.**

* First question: A general or specific question with the answer found in the stimulus. "*What was the population in the year?"*
* Second question: Make connections between and among the different parts of the stimulus. "*In which year was the immigration the greatest?"*
* Third question: Require the student to respond with information related to (but not included in) the stimulus. *"State a historic trend that explains the data?"*

**C. Constructed response questions can assess higher level thinking:**

* comparisons, contrasts, causes, effects, changes
* identify patterns or conflicting points of view
* categorize or summarize information
* construct graphs or charts from data
* state a generalization, conclusion, explanation or prediction

**D. Scoring: Each constructed-response question should be scored according to a rubric(scoring guide) that gives varying degrees of credit for correct or partially correct answers. The rubric should include enough information or examples to allow different raters to arrive the same score for a given student response.**

* A rubric for a short constructed-response question can be:
  + "Complete" score (2) represented a complete and appropriate answer.
  + "Partial" score (1) indicated that the response had some, but not all, of the components of an appropriate response.
  + "Inappropriate" score (0) represented an answer that had none of the components of an appropriate response.

**Extended constructed-response questions are lengthier and more complex exercises that allow for a finer level of discrimination in scoring the responses. Their rubric can be:**

* "Complete" score (3) was assigned to a response that was complete and appropriate.
* "Essential" response (2) was less complete but included the most important components of an appropriate response.
* "Partial" response (1) included some appropriate components, but fewer or less central ones than those required for an "Essential" score.
* "Inappropriate" (0) response included only inappropriate material.

## Writing Effective Summary and Response Essays

**The Summary:**

A summary is a concise paraphrase of all the main ideas in an essay. It cites the author and the title (usually in the first sentence); it contains the essay's thesis and supporting ideas; it may use direct quotation of forceful or concise statements of the author's ideas; it will NOT usually cite the author's examples or supporting details unless they are central to the main idea. Most summaries present the major points in the order that the author made them and continually refer back to the article being summarized (i.e. "Damon argues that ..." or "Goodman also points out that ... "). The summary should take up no more than one-third the length of the work being summarized.

**The Response:**

A response is a critique or evaluation of the author's essay. Unlike the summary, it is composed of YOUR opinions in relation to the article being summarized. It examines ideas that you agree or disagree with and identifies the essay's strengths and weaknesses in reasoning and logic, in quality of supporting examples, and in organization and style. A good response is persuasive; therefore, it should cite facts, examples, and personal experience that either refutes or supports the article you're responding to, depending on your stance.

**Two Typical Organizational Formats for Summary/Response Essays:**

1. Present the summary in a block of paragraphs, followed by the response in a block:

* Intro/thesis
* Summary (two to three paragraphs)
* Agreement (or disagreement)
* Disagreement (or agreement)
* Conclusion
  + ***Note:*** *Some essays will incorporate both agreement and disagreement in a response, but this is not mandatory.*

2. Introduce the essay with a short paragraph that includes your thesis. Then, each body paragraph summarizes one point and responds to it, and a conclusion wraps the essay up.

* Intro/thesis
* Summary point one; agree/disagree
* Summary point two; agree/disagree
* Summary point three; agree/disagree
* Conclusion