

# CUNY Assessment Test in Writing

## Practice Material

Text: "Hang It Up"

Writing Directions

Guidelines for Summaries

Sample Responses and Articulations

## Assignment

Begin by reading the passage below.

### Hang It Up

by Jesse Scaccia

You are a teacher in a public school system, and you are lecturing the class on the structure of an essay. You turn your back to write the definition of "thesis" on the board. You turn around to the class and you see a group of students using electronic devices.

At the end of the term, a handful of students will fail the class. One reason students fail is because of distractions in the classroom, specifically the cellphone. Although electronic devices have been banned in public schools for years, the issue came to the forefront when the New York City schools chancellor announced the random placement of metal detectors in schools. The result: more than 800 cellphones were confiscated.

Students and their parents, who say they rely on cellphones for safety reasons, are outraged. There's even talk of a lawsuit arguing that the rule should be struck down. But as a former public school teacher, I can tell you that cellphones don't belong in the classroom. A student with a cellphone is an uninterested student, one with a short attention span who cares more about his or her social life than education.

Parents think of cellphones as a connection to their children in an emergency. Do you know why your children really want to take cellphones to school? Cellphones are status symbols. When their cellphones ring while the teacher is talking, everyone laughs. Playing video games on their cells makes them look cool. Text messaging their friends in the next room is more fun than learning about topic sentences.

There are legitimate causes that parents should be taking on. But they are wrong on this cellphone issue. In this case, they are part of the problem, not the solution.

### Writing Directions

Read the passage above and write an essay responding to the ideas it presents. In your essay, be sure to summarize the passage in your own words, stating the author's most important ideas. Develop your essay by identifying one idea in the passage that you feel is especially significant, and explain its significance. Support your claims with evidence or examples drawn from what you have read, learned in school, and/or personally experienced.

Remember to review your essay and make any changes or corrections that will help your reader follow your thinking. You will have 90 minutes to complete your essay.

## Guidelines for Summaries

### “Hang It Up”

In response to the writing assignment, writers may present ideas from the text in conventional summaries or throughout the response.

Writers who receive a score of 4, demonstrating competent understanding of the complexity of the ideas in the reading passage, usually refer to the following points:

- Cell phones are a distraction in the classroom.
- Use of cell phones deserves some of the blame for student failure.
- Parents want cell phones for children for emergencies.
- Cell phones are status symbols.

Additional points that may be mentioned:

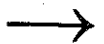
- Students and parents are outraged that cell phones have been banned.
- Parents should fight for more important issues than cell phones.

In the article Hang It Up, Jesse Scaccia expresses her views on the controversial issue of cellphone use in schools. She was a public school teacher, so she has first-hand knowledge as to the distraction that cellphone use has been to students. This distraction can lead to a student's failure.

The issue of cell phone use in schools has sparked debate on both sides of the issue. On one side, parents are opposed to the cell phone ban at school. Their main point of contention is that cell phones are necessary should an emergency arise. I understand why parents may feel strongly about the issue, but if a student is at school, should an emergency arise, there will always be someone who can handle the emergency and contact the parent/s if necessary.

On the other side of the issue is the fact that cell phones are a distraction. I agree with Scaccia who says that distractions can lead to academic failure and cell phones are a distraction. Parents are not with their children at school, so they are unable to see the disruption that cell phone use can cause during a lecture.

The world existed before the inventions of

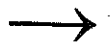


cellphones. I was not raised in a cellphone<sup>age</sup>, however, I commuted to and from school daily with very little difficulty. In the classroom, that was one less distraction. My classmates and I were more focused without cell phones than we would have been if we had them.

Adults generally have a longer attention span than do adolescents, yet cellphones can be a distraction for us. We should, therefore, be able to understand the distraction that can be caused in a classroom. Schools should be an environment for learning, developing skills, and so on. There is a time and a place for everything and school is definitely not the place for cellphone use. There are so many distractions that students have to deal with, let us not add an unnecessary one.

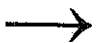
As Scaccia stated, "cellphones are status symbols" for students. Students are more concerned with their social standing, than with attaining an education.

I strongly believe that every venture a person attempts, should be given the best effort possible. Education is no different. A good



education will open doors to untold possibilities. Every effort should be made to attain the best education possible, so if that means reducing or removing any possible distractions, including cell phones, then so let it be.

There is too much at stake, for the future of the children. Parents should be careful to pick their battles wisely. What message are parents sending to their children by talking about law suits to remove the cellphone ban? Parents should really focus on the necessary steps to improve their children's academic accomplishments.



## Scoring Articulations for “Hang It Up”

Paper 6      Scores: 6 6 6 6 6

### **Critical Response to the Writing Task and the Text: 6**

Writing from the perspective of an adult, the writer presents the conflict between parents and schools that is at the heart of the reading selection. The key ideas in the passage are acknowledged and addressed serially and contrasted with the writer’s experience or analysis.

### **Development of the Writer’s Ideas: 6**

While the writer is economical, the response includes key details both from the reading and the writer’s experience.

### **Structure of the Response: 6**

The structure of the essay follows carefully the debate of ideas in the reading and extends a discussion of the parents’ role throughout.

### **Language Use: Sentences and Word Choice: 6**

Although word choice is not flashy, it is clear, precise, and effective. The writer demonstrates obvious strength in sentence variety and flexibility: “I understand why parents may feel strongly about the issue, but if a student is at school, should an emergency arise, there will always be someone who can handle the emergency and contact the parents if necessary.”

### **Language Use: Grammar, Usage, and Mechanics: 6**

Although there may be a few mistakes, strong command of language is apparent: “Adults generally have a longer attention span than do adolescents, yet cellphones can be a distraction for us.”

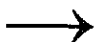
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In reading this passage I can see both ends of the spectrum. It can be very distracting when a student is in a classroom using an electronic device. It can cause the teacher to disrupt his/her lesson and the other students to become disengaged. Coming from the teacher's standpoint ~~there are~~ cellphones do not belong in the classroom. Mrs. Scaccia made some valid points one being the reason students are failing is because of distractions in the classroom.

When thinking of the scenario described in this passage, it definitely is a scenario that probably occurs several times per day to teachers. This can only cause the teacher and the student to become distracted, a portion of the lesson is now missed because the teacher has to stop to ask students to turn off the electronic devices and it interrupts other students from learning.

On the other end of the spectrum I can also understand the parents' concern. Many parents work and may work late hours and would like the comfort of talking to their child/children when they leave school and check in to make sure they arrive home safely. There's always the case where parents want the ability to contact their





child/children in case of an emergency.

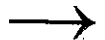
It is hard to believe ~~was~~ there was a time when cellphones did not exist. We can barely fathom the idea because it has become a part of our daily routine and we rely on cellphones and are lost without them.

There are ~~many~~ <sup>a couple of</sup> proposals that I think ~~would~~ both parents and teachers can get their goals achieved. One, I think students can give in cellphones upon entering the school at the beginning of the school day and have them returned at the end of the day. This way if a parent needs to contact a child they can call the school and when the child leaves school they can still call parents for safety purposes as they go home or other after school activities and when they arrive to school in the morning since many ~~parents~~ children travel alone.

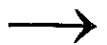
The other proposal would be students are mandated to keep cellphones in bookbags during classes. The cellphone is to be turned down or off ~~to~~ to avoid disrupting the class or lesson. If a student violates this rule then the phone is confiscated and after several offenses student is not allowed to have the phone in school.

~~many other proposals~~

Ultimately, parents should encourage children to



avoid anything that will cause distractions and hinder our children from being educated. We have to instill in our kids the importance of learning and ~~and~~ how they should not allow anything to hold them back ~~that~~ from that experience.



## Scoring Articulations for “Hang It Up”

**Paper 5      Scores: 5 5 5 5 5**

### **Critical Response to the Writing Task and the Text: 5**

The response demonstrates a good understanding of ideas in the text and provides a critical discussion of the reasons for barring cell phones in school and for allowing children to carry them: “On the other end of the spectrum I can also understand the parents’ concern.”

### **Development of the Writer’s Ideas: 5**

The writer effectively develops his or her ideas by summarizing and explaining the teachers’ and parents’ points of view, elaborating on the problems associated with the issue, and offering a couple of solutions.

### **Structure of the Response: 5**

The writer effectively uses a problem/solution structure, and transitions clearly convey relationships among ideas.

### **Language Use: Sentences and Word Choice: 5**

Word choice is effective, and although there is some sentence awkwardness, sentences are varied and well controlled: “One, I think students can give in cellphones upon entering the school at the beginning of the school day and have them returned at the end of the day.”

### **Language Use: Grammar, Usage, and Mechanics: 5**

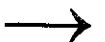
Command of language is good, although there is a pattern of run-on sentences: “It is hard to believe there was a time when cellphones did not exist. We can barely fathom the idea because it has become a part of our daily routine and we rely on cellphones and are lost without them.”

4

Begin essay on this page

In Hang it up by Jesse Scaccia, he states that one reason many students fail a class is due to classroom distractions mainly from students' cellphones. Also he mentions parents argue that cellphones are for safety reasons but students have different reasons for having a cellphone like more social communication than just for emergencies. Scaccia states that these students care more for their social lives than their education and that parents ~~are~~ make it no better by being a part of the problem. He believes that parents look only on one side but are not openminded to the other ~~causes~~<sup>effects</sup> having a cellphone in school has.

There are many arguments behind this cellphone in schools issue. Some ~~doers~~ like the author believes that they are a distraction and causes students to fail. On the other some like parents refuses to see that cellphones have a negative effect or they overlook it because their children need the phones for emergencies. I believe both arguments are true but blaming each other and arguing doesn't solve the problem and prevent students from failing. The problem just gets worse because students are starting to not care anymore and also technology improvements makes phones more interesting



that a simple math or english lesson ~~cannot~~ <sup>cannot</sup> compare to ~~these~~ these cellphones.

When I was in high school once in awhile you walked on the grounds surprised by the huge metal detectors that didn't really crack down on weapons brought in the school but mainly on ~~the~~ cellphones that we are not to bring in. ~~After~~ At the end of a school day there was always a long line of thousands of students waiting to receive their cellphones some of which might have been stolen. Therefore, these laws and measures taken to prevent students from bringing cellphones has created more problems.

Schools need to find other solutions that benefits the grades of a student and the parents reason ~~for~~ for giving their child a cellphone. ~~Instead~~ Instead of blaming parents and everyone else. Schools become more violent because petty things like bringing a cellphone has become so major that students slip by with razors and knives and sometimes even guns.

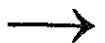
For instance, my last year in school there was a big argument between a group of boys that led to a fight. The next day ~~or~~ metal detectors

→

were brought in. Eg Everyone thought it was because of the fight. Every cell phone got taken away but after school one boy showed up outside another boys class with a kitchen knife. Yes, cellphones do affect students learning and distract others but there are so many other solutions to this than metal detectors or telling students their phones are not allowed but violence increases due to ~~the~~ more focus on getting rid of cellphones.

Schools should enforce that students use the school phones for emergencies and that parents call the school instead of the students phones. Also teachers have a role to play because they are not a good example sometimes for students because they use their cellphones during class time also but get ~~down~~ down on students when they use theirs. Working together to solve this problem and find a solution is what should be done instead of ~~for~~ schools against parents and students.

~~Parents should not make a right~~



## Scoring Articulations for “Hang It Up”

**Paper 4      Scores: 4 4 4 4 4**

### **Critical Response to the Writing Task and the Text: 4**

The response competently records the key information from the reading passage then integrates several ideas with the writer’s experience and perspective that demonstrate an understanding of some of the complexity of the text.

### **Development of the Writer’s Ideas: 4**

The writer tests relevant ideas against her/his school’s practice, competently including specific details from the passage and her/his experience: “When I was in high school once in awhile you walked on the grounds surprised by the huge metal detectors that didn’t really crack down on weapons brought in the school but mainly on the cellphones that we are not to bring in.”

### **Structure of the Response: 4**

The progression of the response focuses on the school’s ineffective procedures and offers solutions to the problem. Transitions adequately convey relationships among ideas, though occasionally connections could be clearer: “At the end of a school day there was always a long line of thousands of students waiting to receive their cellphones some of which might have been stolen.”

### **Language Use: Sentences and Word Choice: 4**

Most sentences are competently controlled, and word choice generally conveys meaning: “Schools become more violent because petty things like bringing a cellphone has become so major that students slip by with razors and knives and sometimes even guns.”

### **Language Use: Grammar, Usage, and Mechanics: 4**

The writing is generally correct and clear, though not error-free: “Yes, cellphones do affect students learning and distract others but there are so many other solutions to this than metal detectors or telling students their phones are not allowed but violence increases due to more focus on getting rid of cellphones.”

In the essay "Hang It Up" by Jesse Scaccia, touches today's very important issue that cellphones. He explains his idea in two side such as parents and children. Parents want their children to have cellphones for reaching them easily and as soon as possible in an emergency position.

But students use the cellphones for different reasons.

Even though parents are wondering about children and they buy cellphones for them, children use cellphones for fun, text messaging, watching video and playing games. So cellphones effect their education and they left behind.

I totally agree with banning cellphones in public schools. Actually not only cellphones but also all electronic devices have to ban in public schools. Because of students, Because of their future. They cannot think most of the time what is important for them. Teacher means teach to them. They have to do whatever they can do to teach students that what is important.

There are many electronic devices. I do not know most of electronic device's names either

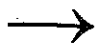




But these little children have them and just care about their devices. They do not interested in neither class or teacher and parents.

When I was a child, we did not have cell phones or electronic devices. I remember in the class we just listened to the teacher. It was not possible to interested in something else and also there was no opportunity. Finally, did we loose something? No, we did not loose anything. We earned many things by the way.

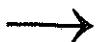
I will be a teacher and I am being emphatic. If I were a teacher, what I have to do, what I should not do. As a student I really try to respect all my teachers right now. I try to understand them and make sure that being good with my behaviors. One of my friend asked me "Why don't you send a message in the class?" I said that "If I were a teacher, I don't like if my student text messaging or drop something with cellphones in the classroom while I'm teaching." It is not difficult to wish others. We just need to think that if I were them what is the best thing to do. Then we will find the



right answer.

One of my teacher, if someone's cellphone's ring, she picks the cellphones up and she gives back end of the class. Now everybody try to be careful about their cellphones. They switch off always.

Finally, I can say that using cellphones is not good not only students but also teachers. Students cannot catch up later on, they have problem with concentration in the class and they fail the class. Teacher can lost the concentration also while she lecturing, and it is not respectful for teacher to use cellphones when they trying to teach us something.



## Scoring Articulations for “Hang It Up”

Paper 3      Scores: 3 3 3 3 3

### **Critical Response to the Writing Task and the Text: 3**

The response briefly summarizes the text in the first two paragraphs then provides several reasons for why cell phones should not be allowed in classrooms. On the whole, the response is on-topic and addresses the issue determinedly, but not always intelligibly and consistently. Some superficial understanding of the text is demonstrated.

### **Development of the Writer’s Ideas: 3**

The development of ideas is uneven and occasionally distracting because of the use of less relevant details from the writer’s experience: “There are many electronic devices. I do not know most of electronic device’s names either. But these little children have them and just care about their devices. They do not interested in neither class or teacher and parents.”

### **Structure of the Response: 3**

The writer shifts to a new approach halfway through—the writer’s goals as a future teacher and the empathy that creates—but this discussion is not effectively linked to the other paragraphs.

### **Language Use: Sentences and Word Choice: 3**

Sentence control is uneven: “If I were a teacher, what I have to do, what I should not do.” Word choice is simple: “As a student I really try to respect my teachers right now. I try to understand them and make sure that being good with my behaviors.” This is an example of writing that, while on the low side of the 3 scoring range, remains clear enough to convey meaning.

### **Language Use: Grammar, Usage, and Mechanics: 3**

Command of language is uneven, and some errors are distracting: “One of my teacher, if someone’s cellphone’s ring, she picks the cellphones up and she gives back end of the class. Now everybody try to be carefull about their cellphones. They switch off always.” As with Sentences and Word Choice, this is a low 3.

2

Begin essay on this page

In this article "Hang it up" written by Jesse Scaccia. The author says that when teachers teach in class you will see some students using electronic devices. And they fail in exam because of one reason: distraction in the classroom. A student with the cell phone could not concentrate on study and he gives more importance to his social life. Parents think that cell phones could be used for emergency for children, but nowadays cell phones are status symbols.

"The student who fails in exam because of distractions in the classroom, specially the cell phone." I feel that this article is very interesting because this article reminds me about my friend who could not concentrate on study. And he was always texting the message to his friends. That's why he failed in college exams.

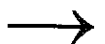
My friend's name is Amit. He was born in Uttar Pradesh and raised in Mumbai. He was a very intelligent guy about his studies. After finishing the school exams, he entered college. On those days cell phones were very new for him because he was from a poor family. And he had a financial problem so he could not buy a cell phone.

large

Very ~~less~~ number of people use the cell phones in their college. on first year he scored a good marks in college So his uncle brought a new cell phone. And the cell phone was ~~the~~ <sup>with</sup> camera, and internet connection - Later on he was texting the message to his friends. And he ~~was~~ <sup>was</sup> addicted to ~~texting~~ <sup>texting</sup> the message to his friends. So he could not concentrate on his studies ..

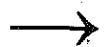
when teacher was ~~teaching~~ teaching a main subject in class. He used to chat with his girl friend and ~~class~~ <sup>class mates</sup>. And he always divert the mind in cell phone. Before without cell phone he was very intelligent guy about his studies. His father and mother was so proud of him. Later on he failed in exams and ~~he~~ <sup>he</sup> was so nervous because if his father saw his results so he going to take his cell phone that why he didn't show the results also to his parents.

Later on college principal announced that electronic device should not use when lecture is going on. Then also he chat with his girlfriend. After that one day professor caught him while



texting the message - The professor gave ~~the~~<sup>his</sup> cell phone to ~~the~~ college principal. And the principal called his parents. And the parents was ~~was~~<sup>crying</sup> in front of ~~the~~ him because parents ambition was ~~to~~ Amit should become an Accountant. But he failed in exams because of distraction in the classroom. And he could not concentrate on the studies because of cell phone.

In conclusion Amit's life was good when he didn't have a cell phone. ~~Cell phone~~ Addicted to texting the message ~~made~~<sup>made him</sup> a bad status in ~~college~~<sup>colleges</sup>. And he failed in exam because of not focusing in classroom. But we can say that parents think that cell phone is for emergency. But nowadays cell phones are status of symbol.



## Scoring Articulations for “Hang It Up”

Paper 2      Scores: 2 2 2 2 2

### **Critical Response to the Writing Task and the Text: 2**

The response shows little integration of ideas from the text and the writer’s experience. The extended and superfluous personal history overpowers the purpose of sharing it: to provide an example of parents not understanding the allure of cell phones for their children. The writer’s limited vocabulary weakens her/his response.

### **Development of the Writer’s Ideas: 2**

An over-detailed narrative about a friend occupies most of the response. While the narrative may illustrate a main idea in the passage, the writer does not analyze or evaluate it to link the personal narrative and the idea from the text effectively.

### **Structure of the Response: 2**

The only structural choice made by this writer is to tell a story tangentially related to the topic. Few transitions are used to convey relationships among ideas: “Before without cell phone he was very intelligent guy about his studies. His father and mother was so proud of him. Later on he failed in exams and he was so nervous because if his father saw his results so he going to take his cellphone that why he didn’t show the results also to his parents.”

### **Language Use: Sentences and Word Choice: 2**

Sentence structure is repetitive, demonstrating weak control and inadequate vocabulary: “After that one day professor caught him while texting the message. The professor gave his cell phone to college principal. And the principal called his parents. And the parents was crying in front of him because parents ambition was Amit should become a Accountant. But he failed in exams because of distraction in the classroom. And he could not concentrate on the studies because of cell phone.”

### **Language Use: Grammar, Usage, and Mechanics: 2**

Throughout the response there is weak command of language with frequent, distracting errors: “Addicted to texting the message made him a bad status in college. And he failed in exam because of not focusing in classroom. But we can say that parents think that cellphones is for emergency. But nowadays cellphones are status of symbol.”

Begin essay on this page

①

The cell phone is an important in the daily life, but in the classroom is one of problem more big that the teacher confront every day. The student who using cell phone in the classroom is a person who in the final of the class need take a remedial class because they never pay attention about to everithing referent to they need know in the class.

The parents and students who depend a cell phone to know and safely, they cant admit the cell phone is a way to desconet a students to the class.

They cant accept a cellphone in the classroom is not permit.

The cellphone in the classroom is ring this cause a distraction a other studen

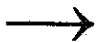
They think pay attention a cell phone is more interesting to learned math.





The parents they didn't not how big  
problemt they cause when they giving  
a cell phone ar students and they used  
this in the classroom.

When I studies in High School some-  
time I used my cell phone to conect  
to my parents, when this ring this cause  
in me a desconection.



## Scoring Articulations for “Hang It Up”

Paper 1      Scores: 1 1 1 1 1

### **Critical Response to the Writing Task and the Text: 1**

The attempt to respond to the task is minimal despite a slight recognition of the topic. The reading passage is never acknowledged, though much of the response appears to be an attempt to summarize it.

### **Development of the Writer’s Ideas: 1**

The interplay between the ideas in the text and the writer’s own ideas is nonexistent despite several attempts to engage the issue. Although a few details from the passage show up, the writer’s own experience is not used except for the last sentence: “When I studies in High School sometime I used my cell phone to conect to my parents, when this ring this cause in me a desconection.”

### **Structure of the Response: 1**

The response is a collection of notes, not an organized response. Transitions are rarely used.

### **Language Use: Sentences and Word Choice: 1**

Sentences demonstrate minimal control. A few key words are repeated from the passage, but, otherwise, word choice is quite limited: “They think pay attention a cell phone is more interesting to learned math.”

### **Language Use: Grammar, Usage, and Mechanics: 1**

There is minimal command of language: “The parents and students who depend a cell phone to know and safely, they can’t admit the cell phone is a way to desconet a students to the class.”