

Name \_\_\_\_\_

# Writing Short Answer Responses

## The ACE Method

Consider the following scenario:

- You are asked to read a text (e.g., poem, story, report, essay, article, etc.).
- You must respond to a short answer question about the text.
- You must support your answer with evidence from the text.

What method can you follow when writing your response?

The **ACE** Method!

**A** – **Answer** the question

**C** – **Cite** evidence to support your answer

**E** – **Explain** how the **evidence** supports your answer

### Using the ACE Method

#### Example:

Linda loves animals. She owns two cats and a dog. She and her pets live in a quiet apartment complex. Linda and her neighbors love the peaceful, serene environment. Over the past three weeks, Linda has noticed three feral (wild) cats lingering around the parking lot of her complex. Linda worries that the cats may not be getting enough food and are cold at night, when temperatures dip into the 40s. Linda would like to adopt the cats and make them her own. She dreams of the day when she can snuggle with the cats on her sofa and cuddle them in her arms. Before attempting to capture the cats and take them home, Linda decides to seek advice from her veterinarian, Dr. Booker.

According to Dr. Booker, feral cats often do not get along with domestic pets already in a household. Feral cats also have been known to physically attack individuals they encounter. They can be noisy too, according to Dr. Booker. Dr. Booker shares additional information with Linda in the hope that she will abandon her plan to adopt the cats.

Linda is grateful for Dr. Booker's advice. Nevertheless, she believes that love conquers all. She is certain that the cats will grow to love her. She intends to be careful when attempting to capture the cats. She will ask several friends to help her. Additionally, she plans to take the cats to the veterinarian to make sure they don't have any health problems.

**Do you agree with Linda’s decision to adopt the feral cats she discovered in the parking lot?**

## Responding Using the ACE Method

No, I do not agree with Linda’s decision to adopt the feral cats she discovered in the parking lot. According to the text, Linda’s veterinarian did not approve of Linda’s decision. Dr. Booker gave several reasons why he did not approve. For example, he told Linda that “wild cats often do not get along with domestic pets already in a household.” Linda currently owns a dog and two cats, so attempting to adopt feral cats is a bad idea. In addition, Dr. Booker said feral cats may “attack” anyone who gets too close to them. Therefore, Linda might be attacked when she tries to capture the cats. Linda could also be hurt if she goes through with her plan to “snuggle with” and “cuddle” the cats. Finally, Dr. Booker told Linda that feral cats can be noisy. Linda lives in a quiet apartment complex, and many of her neighbors enjoy the peaceful environment. Noisy feral cats would disturb this environment. Based on this evidence, I do not agree with Linda’s decision to adopt the feral cats she discovered in the parking lot.

**How does the response above reflect the ACE Method?**



### ACE Step 1:

#### A – ANSWER the Question

- Directly answer the question you are asked.
- Answer in one sentence (generally).
- As you answer, use the same words that were used in the question.

**Do you agree with Linda’s decision to adopt the three feral cats she discovered in the parking lot?**

**A - ANSWER: No, I do not agree with Linda’s decision to adopt the feral cats she discovered in the parking lot.**

- This response directly answers the question.
- It is only one sentence long.
- It uses the same words that were used in the question.



## ACE Step 2:

### C – CITE Evidence to Support Your Answer

- Provide evidence **from the text** to support the answer you presented in Step 1.
  - Introduce the evidence with phrases like **according to the text, the passage states, in paragraph X it states, for example**, etc.
  - If you list more than one piece of evidence, use the following words to transition from one piece to the next: **in addition, additionally, moreover, furthermore, in fact**, etc.

**Do you agree with Linda’s decision to adopt the three feral cats she discovered in the parking lot?**

**A - ANSWER:** No, I do not agree with Linda’s decision to adopt the feral cats she discovered in the parking lot.

**C - CITE EVIDENCE:** According to the text, **Linda’s veterinarian did not approve of Linda’s idea. Dr. Booker gave several reasons why he did not approve.** For example, he told Linda that **“wild cats often do not get along with domestic pets already in a household.”** In addition, Dr. Booker said **feral cats may “attack” anyone who gets too close to them.** Finally, Dr. Booker told Linda that **feral cats can be noisy.**

- This response **cites** evidence **from the text** to support the answer presented in Step 1.
- It introduces the evidence with phrases like **according to the text** and **for example**.
- The writer uses **“in addition”** and **“finally”** when moving from one piece of evidence to the next.



## ACE Step 3:

### E – EXPLAIN Your Evidence

- **Explain** how the **evidence** supports your answer.

**Do you agree with Linda’s decision to adopt the feral cats she discovered in the parking lot?**

**A – ANSWER:** No, I do not agree with Linda’s decision to adopt the feral cats she discovered in the parking lot.

**C – CITE EVIDENCE:** According to the text, Linda’s veterinarian did not approve of Linda’s decision. Dr. Booker gave several reasons why he did not approve. For example, he told Linda that “wild cats often do not get along with domestic pets already in a household.” In addition, Dr. Booker said feral cats may “attack” anyone who gets too close to them. Finally, Dr. Booker told Linda that feral cats can be noisy.

**E – EXPLAIN YOUR EVIDENCE:** According to the text, Linda’s veterinarian did not approve of Linda’s decision. Dr. Booker gave several reasons why he did not approve. For example, he told Linda that “wild cats often do not get along with domestic pets already in a household.” **Linda currently owns a dog and two cats, so attempting to adopt feral cats is a bad idea.** In addition, Dr. Booker said feral cats may “attack” anyone who gets too close to them. **Therefore, Linda might be attacked when she tries to capture the cats. Linda could also be hurt if she goes through with her plan to “snuggle with” and “cuddle” the cats.** Finally, Dr. Booker told Linda that feral cats can be noisy. **Linda lives in a quiet apartment complex, and many of her neighbors enjoy the peaceful environment. Noisy feral cats would disturb this environment.**

**Based on this evidence, I do not agree with Linda’s decision to adopt the feral cats she discovered in the parking lot.**

- The statements highlighted above **explain** how the **evidence** supports the answer.
- The optional last sentence simply repeats the first sentence (A – Answer).
  - It can be introduced with one of the following phrases: **based on this evidence, it is clear from this evidence, in light of this evidence, from this evidence I can conclude**, etc.

Combine steps 1, 2, and 3 to create an ACE short-answer response:

**Do you agree with Linda’s decision to adopt the feral cats she discovered in the parking lot?**

No, I do not agree with Linda’s decision to adopt the feral cats she discovered in the parking lot. According to the text, Linda’s veterinarian did not approve of Linda’s decision. Dr. Booker gave several reasons why he did not approve. For example, he told Linda that “wild cats often do not get along with domestic pets already in a household.” Linda currently owns a dog and two cats, so attempting to adopt feral cats is a bad idea. In addition, Dr. Booker said feral cats may “attack” anyone who gets too close to them. Therefore, Linda might be attacked when she tries to capture the cats. Linda could also be hurt if she goes through with her plan to “snuggle with” and “cuddle” the cats. Finally, Dr. Booker told Linda that feral cats can be noisy. Linda lives in a quiet apartment complex, and many of her neighbors enjoy the peaceful environment. Noisy feral cats would disturb this environment.

Based on this evidence, I do not agree with Linda’s decision to adopt the feral cats she discovered in the parking lot.



## Your Turn!

**Directions:** Read the following passage. Then answer the question that follows **using the ACE Method**.

Dalmatians are a beloved dog breed in the United States. They have been immortalized in films like *101 Dalmatians*. These kind creatures have a lot of energy. If you spend a significant amount of time exercising each day, then a Dalmatian is a good match for your lifestyle. If you don't exercise daily, put aside one to two hours each day to spend with your pet. Use the time to engage in running, rollerblading, or some other high-intensity activity.

As you can imagine, Dalmatians love to be around people and other dogs. Doggie daycare won't do for this breed. Hours alone could lead to excessive barking or other behaviors symptomatic of a dog that has pent up energy (like damaging property). Dalmatians are a gentle breed. However, they can be challenging to train. The key to success in training is patience. You will need a lot of patience to whip your Dalmatian into shape.

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James is a 15-year-old boy. He and his younger brother Tommy (who is four years-old) live with his grandfather and grandmother on a farm. During the summer, James mows his neighbors' lawns for money. After saving up quite a bit of money over this past summer, James asks his grandfather for permission to buy a dog. His grandfather grants him permission. James has his heart set on buying a Dalmatian because they seem like a loyal, fun, and friendly breed of dog.

The school year will be back in full swing in just a few weeks. Once school begins, James will be a very busy teenager with an active social life. He is on the basketball team, soccer team, and is a member of the math club. On some weekends, he helps his grandmother sell vegetables at the local market.

James figures he'll feed his Dalmatian in the morning just before school. Then, he plans to leave the dog in his bedroom while he is away at school. He will leave some toys for the Dalmatian to play with. James plans to feed the dog dinner when he arrives home around seven o'clock each night. James also intends to play with the dog for a little while each night after he completes his homework.

Do you agree with James' decision to choose a Dalmatian as a pet?

Remember:

**A – Answer** the question

**C – Cite** your evidence

**E – Explain** how the evidence supports your answer

Refer to the previous pages for assistance in producing your answer.