Insights into ECCE Classroom Writing and Assessment

Part III
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ECCE LETTER WRITING LESSON PLAN

STAGE 1: Understanding the prompt and brainstorming

Step 1: Warm-up: Teacher should briefly discuss the following with the class as a whole. Teacher should not comment on any of the students’ responses. The questions are used as a stimulus to activate students’ background knowledge and to get them interested in the tasks they will have to do later in the lesson.

a. How do you feel about your school schedule?
b. How long is your school day?
c. What are some of the subjects you do at school?
d. How much time do you spend studying every day?
e. Do you have any free time?
f. What do you do in your free time?
g. Do you think the school summer vacation is long or short?
h. Are you satisfied with the education you are getting in school?
i. What are some of the things that can be done to improve education in your country?

Step 2: Teacher should ask students to work individually to read the prompt and underline all key language.

THE CITY TIMES

Length of School day to be increased

The Ministry of Education has recently decided to increase the school day by one hour. In return for the longer school day, the ministry will extend the summer vacation by one week. The new change will be in place by the next school year. Some teachers, students, and parents are strongly against the longer school day. However, others think more time spent in school will improve the level of education in the country.

ELI News Service

Step 3: Once students have read the prompt the teacher should ask students the following questions:

a. What has the ministry decided to do?
b. How does the ministry plan to compensate students for the longer school day?
c. When will the changes go into effect?
d. How do teachers, students and parents feel about these changes?
e. Why has the ministry decided to make these changes?

Step 4: Teacher should ask students to work in pairs to paraphrase the following:

a. increase the school day by one hour
b. in return for the longer school day
c. extend the summer vacation by one week
d. are strongly against the longer school day
e. others think that more time spent in school will improve the level of education in the country

Step 5: Teacher should ask students to explain the prompt in their own words.

Step 6: Teacher should ask students to work in pairs to guess what the letter-writing task might ask them to do.

Step 7: Teacher should ask students to work in pairs to guess what the essay topic might be?

Step 8: Teacher should give students the letter and essay task. Students should be asked to read both tasks in order to confirm their predictions.
**Letter:** You and your classmates have been discussing the article, which appeared in your local newspaper. You feel it is important to let the community know how students feel about the decision announced in the article, and it will affect them. You are the class representative. Write a letter stating your opinions and those of your classmates to the editor of the newspaper. Begin your letter, “Dear Editor.”

**Essay:** In many countries there is the belief that children are not spending enough time in school. Given the demands of society, some people think that children need to have more education than ever before. One way to educate children better is to require them to spend more time in school. Would lengthening the school day improve the quality of education in your country? Discuss your opinion, supporting it with examples.

**Step 9:** Teacher should ask students to work in pairs to think about how they feel about the changes the Ministry of Education is planning to make. In other words, they should decide whether they agree or disagree with increasing the school day and making the summer vacation longer. They should also discuss the reasons they believe these changes should or should not take place and make a list of these reasons. They should make two separate lists: one for making the school day longer by one hour and one for extending the summer vacation by one week. Teacher should ask students to think about how the changes the ministry has decided to make will affect them at school or in their daily lives.

**Step 10:** Teacher should then work with the class as a whole and receive feedback from all the pairs. Teacher should first receive feedback from those who agree with the Ministry of Education’s decision, putting their best reasons on the blackboard and including some examples. Then the teacher should receive feedback from the pairs that disagree with the ministry’s decision, writing the best reasons on the blackboard as well, with some examples. Teacher should leave these lists on the blackboard for students to use later in the lesson when they write the main body of their letter.

During this stage the teacher should also elicit or provide topic related vocabulary and synonyms (e.g. homework assignments, school time, schedule, curriculum, subjects, lengthen the school day, make the school day longer, lengthen the summer vacation, add an extra hour/week to the school day/summer vacation, improve the quality of education, pursue one’s hobbies, free time, relaxation time, mental health, healthy mind and body, etc.)

**STAGE 2: Understanding the letter-writing task and writing an introduction**

**Step 1:** Letter-writing task: Once all reasons for and against the ministry’s decision have been discussed the teacher should ask the students to read the letter-writing task. Teacher should ask students to tell the rest of the class what the task requires them to do. Teacher should ask students to answer the following questions:
   a. Who are they writing their letter to?
   b. Who is writing the letter and why?

Teacher should ask students to tell the rest of the class what the task is asking them to do in their words.

**Step 2:** Teacher should then discuss the introductory statement (prologue) with the class as a whole. Teacher should elicit from students how they should start their letter and why. Students should start with “Dear Editor,” state who they are and why they are writing their letter. Teacher should warn students to try to use their own language as much as possible and not to copy language from the prompt.

**Step 3:** Teacher should give the pairs about five minutes to write their introduction.

**STAGE 3: Students compare their introduction with that of the benchmarked letters**

**Step 1:** After students have written their introductory statement, teacher should ask students to work in pairs to carefully examine the introductions provided in the benchmarked letters B and C and compare them with their own. They should compare them in terms of content, sequencing of ideas and language use.

**Step 2:** Teacher should then ask students to discuss the similarities and differences they have been able to find. Teacher should explain what a good introduction to this letter should be like.
Step 3: Students then should be asked to work with their partner to edit their introduction based on the knowledge they gained by comparing their initial introductory statements with those of the benchmarked letters (B and C). Teacher should act as a guide and a facilitator during this step.

STAGE 4: Developing and editing the main body paragraphs

Step 1: Once the pairs have made all the necessary improvements to their introduction, then the teacher should proceed to work on the main body of the letter. Teacher should have students study the lists of reasons for agreeing or disagreeing with the Ministry of Education's decision. Teacher should ask students to work with their partner to think about how they will organize their letter. They will probably need to write two main body paragraphs. This means that they will have to decide what should be included in each paragraph. In the first paragraph they should discuss how in their opinion the longer school day will benefit them (if they agree with the ministry’s decision) or how it might be a problem for them (if they disagree with the ministry’s decision). In the second paragraph they will need to discuss how necessary it will be to extend the summer vacation and if/how that will affect them. During this step, the teacher should go from pair to pair providing guidance to the students. Alternatively ideas can be discussed with the students as a class.

Step 2: Teacher should ask students to work with their partner to write their two main body paragraphs in approximately fifteen minutes.

Step 3: Once students have written their main body paragraphs, they should work with their partner to compare them with those of the benchmarked letters (B and C). They should compare their paragraphs in terms of purpose and content, logical sequencing of ideas and language use. Teacher should go from pair to pair guiding the students as they are comparing similarities and differences.

Step 4: Teacher should then discuss the differences and similarities with the class as a whole and explain to the students how they can make their main body paragraphs better. The main body should include the reasons why students agree or disagree with the ministry’s decision and examples that will support their views.

Step 5: Teacher should then ask students to edit their paragraphs, using knowledge gained by comparing their initial main body paragraphs with those provided in the benchmarked letters (B and C). Teacher should go from pair to pair, providing guidance and assistance.

STAGE 5: Developing and editing the conclusion

Step 1: Teacher should discuss with the class as whole what the content of the conclusion should be. In the conclusion, students should summarize the main points (reasons) they discussed in the two main paragraphs.

Step 2: Teacher should ask students to work with their partner to read their main body paragraphs carefully and decide what points they will include in their conclusion.

Step 3: Teacher should give pairs five minutes to write their conclusion.

Step 4: Once the pairs have written their conclusion, they then should compare their concluding paragraph with the conclusions provided in the benchmarked letters (B and C). They should discuss the differences and similarities in terms of content, sequencing of ideas and language use. As students are doing this, teacher should go from pair to pair, assisting and guiding students.

Step 5: Teacher should then ask the pairs to edit their conclusion making use of the knowledge they gained during the previous stage.

STAGE 6: Providing smooth connection between paragraphs and final editing

Step 1: Teacher should ask pairs to exchange letters. Students should then be asked to read another pair’s letter to
see how well connected the paragraphs are and then make the necessary adjustments. Teacher should guide and assist students in doing this. Teacher should make sure that students are using appropriate connectors and linking devices that match the style of the writing.

**Step 2:** Then students should be asked to check their classmates’ letter for language problems (mainly incorrect tenses, inappropriate use of vocabulary, spelling errors, punctuation, etc.). Teacher should assist pairs as they are doing this. Pairs should be asked not to make any corrections on the paper. They should only underline what they think is incorrect, writing next to it the kind of mistake it is (e.g. wrong tense, wrong word, spelling error, punctuation, etc.)

**Step 3:** At the end of the session, the letters should be returned to the students who wrote them so that they can make the corrections at home. Alternatively, these students can make their corrections in class during the next session.

**NOTICE:** Teachers could follow the steps described in this lesson plan for developing better essay writing skills.

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**EDITING A BENCHMARKED LETTER (D)**

The activity below is intended to give students the opportunity to apply the knowledge they gained during the ECCE Letter Writing Lesson.

### ECCE 2007 Benchmark (D)

**Dear Editor,**

My name is Stamoulakis Georgia and I represent my class. (Introduction)

Our classmates disagree with the Ministry of Education, because it has decided to increase the school day by one hour. The Ministry of Education believe that we'll have more summer vacation but we believe the summer vacation is longer. (main body, paragraph 1)

On the other hand, to increase the school day by one hour in my opinion is difficult for us. Because we have hard work after the school and we can't spend time on sports or hobbies etc. (main body, paragraph 2)

I think we can cover the material in a better way.

In addition, more hours at school might be boring for the students.

Finally we are strongly against the school day.

Sincerely yours

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**Commentary on the essay by the Center for Applied Linguistics and Language Studies, Hellenic American Union:**

**Comments:** This letter is short and only minimally developed. Organization is adequate. Connectors are appropriately but mechanically used (“On the other hand…, In addition…”). There are also numerous basic language errors and they cause confusion (“The Ministry of Education believe how we’ll have more summer vacation but we believe the summer vacation is a longer is a longer”).

**STAGE 1: Students edit a (D) letter**

Students should work in pairs or in groups of three to edit the letter in the box following the guidelines provided below.

1. **Introduction:** This introduction is incomplete. In the introductory paragraph of a letter we need to mention who the writer is and why she is writing the letter (the purpose). The writer does not mention the purpose.

2. **Main body, paragraph 1:** This paragraph may function as an intended introductory paragraph. The writer expresses her and her classmates’ disagreement with the decision of the Ministry of Education to increase the school day by one hour and to make the summer vacation a bit longer and gives his/her reason why the summer vacation should not be extended.
One way of improving the organization of this letter is to combine the first sentence of the letter and the second paragraph to create an effective introductory paragraph. Also the language should be changed so that it does not rely on the prompt so much.

Another way to improve the organization of this letter is a) to create an introductory paragraph, mentioning who the writer is and her purpose for writing and then b) create two separate paragraphs for the main body. In the first paragraph the decision of extending summer vacation should be discussed and analyzed, giving the ways it may or may not affect students. Increasing the school day should be discussed in the second main body paragraph.

3. **Main body, paragraph 2:** In the second paragraph what should be discussed is why increasing the school day by one hour is a bad idea and how this will affect the students. Examples of “hard work after school” should be given and an explanation should be provided why sports and hobbies are important for young teenagers to pursue after school.

4. The end of the letter contains two ideas (two sentences) that could **either** be combined to produce a topic sentence for a third paragraph which elaborates on these points providing examples **or** these ideas could be included in a concluding paragraph which sums up the main points of the two main body paragraphs and gives suggestions.

5. The last sentence of this letter could be used as the topic sentence of the conclusion with the previous two sentences combined to provide suggestions and explanations for the suggestions.

**STAGE 2: Students compare their edited letter (D) with the letter below.**

This is an edited version of the same letter the students were asked to edit. It has been edited by the members of the academic team of the Hellenic American Union and the Hellenic American University.

For further reinforcement, students could be asked to compare their edited letter (D) with the one below.

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Dear Editor,

My name is Stamoulakis Georgia and I represent my class. My classmates and I would like to express our views about the Ministry of Education's decision to add another hour to the student's daily schedule and to make the school vacation shorter by one week.

First of all, we believe that we do not need an additional week of vacation because our vacation is long enough as it is. Our vacation starts the second week of June and ends the second week of September. We have almost three months off to rest and relax and return to school well-rested and refreshed.

On the other hand, one additional hour every day will be difficult for all of us. We generally have a lot of hard work to do after school as we have a lot of subjects to study for and quite a few assignments to do. If the Ministry of Education adds one more hour to the school day, we will not have any free time to relax, do sports or pursue our hobbies. We believe that relaxation, exercise, and hobbies are important for a healthy mind and body.

We are strongly against making the school day longer because we believe that if the material is covered better in class, the lessons will be more interesting, the students will not be bored or tired and they will be able to learn much more than they do now.

Sincerely yours,

EXAM DAY TIPS FOR STUDENTS

1. Read the prompt very carefully and underline key language as you are reading it. Try to paraphrase the prompt to make sure that you have understood it well.

2. Before reading the letter and the essay tasks, try to guess what they might be about. If you have understood the prompt well, you should be able to correctly guess what the two tasks will require you to write about.
3. Before you start writing your letter or essay, take 3-4 minutes to think about the topic. Think of ideas and examples. Also, think about how you will organize your letter or essay. What you will include in the prologue, the main body (how many paragraphs the main body will be), and your conclusion.

4. Make sure that you do not copy language from the prompt. Think about how you can express the same ideas in a different way. Think of synonyms you can use (for example, make something better, instead of “improving” it).

5. Make sure that you use a mixture of simple and complex sentences to add variety to your letter or essay and to make it interesting for someone to read.

6. Be sure that your ideas are expressed as clearly as possible. To accomplish this avoid translating from Greek into English and think directly in English.

7. Be sure that your ideas are expressed in a logical and orderly fashion. For example, you should first state whether you agree or disagree with something, then give your reason, and then provide an example that illustrates your reason.

8. Make sure that there is smooth connection between paragraphs. Use linking devices that match your style of writing.

9. Focus on developing the topic well and on writing a well-organized letter or essay.

10. Try to leave a couple of minutes at the end so that you can check your letter or essay for mistakes in tenses, inappropriate use of vocabulary or spelling errors, and missing or misused punctuation.

11. Use a pencil to write your letter or essay so that you can make corrections easily.

**ECCE Benchmarked Letters by the Center for Applied Linguistics and Language Studies, Hellenic American Union.**

The following ECCE Written Section prompt is included in the “Practice Tests for the ECCE”, developed by the English Language Institute of the University of Michigan and is distributed free of charge by the Hellenic American Union. The letters that follow the prompt have been benchmarked by the academic team of the Hellenic American Union and the Hellenic American University.

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**THE CITY TIMES**

**Length of School day to be increased**

The Ministry of Education has recently decided to increase the school day by one hour. In return for the longer school day, the ministry will extend the summer vacation by one week. The new change will be in place by the next school year. Some teachers, students, and parents are strongly against the longer school day. However, others think more time spent in school will improve the level of education in the country.

**ELI News Service**

Letter: You and your classmates have been discussing the article, which appeared in your local newspaper. You feel it is important to let the community know how students feel about the decision announced in the article, and it will affect them. You are the class representative. Write a letter stating your opinions and those of your classmates to the editor of the newspaper. Begin your letter, “Dear Editor.”

Essay: In many countries there is the belief that children are not spending enough time in school. Given the demands of society, some people think that children need to have more education than ever before. One way to educate children better is to require them to spend more time in school. Would lengthening the school day improve the quality of education in your country? Discuss your opinion, supporting it with examples.
Insights into ECCE Classroom Writing and Assessment, Part III
Hellenic American Union, May 2007

Dear Editor,
I am writing this letter in order to express the students’ opinion concerning the decision of the ministry of education to extend the school day by one hour. We read about this decision of the Ministry in the local newspaper and after a lot of thinking we believe that the extension of the school day should not take place. The school day as it is today is already tiring for the students and the teachers too. If it gets extended by one more hour that will affect both the mood of the students and their desire for learning. What I mean is that when the students get tired, they can not participate in the lesson. Also, when the teachers get tired, they lose their ability to teach and can not control their class.
The extension of the school day will not only affect the teachers and the students but also their families. In modern times most of families, due to obligations, gather around only for dinner. If the school day gets extended, this opportunity will be lost by another hour of school.
To summarize, we would like this decision not to take place because we the students believe that we will not gain any more knowledge that what is already given during these hours at school. We will also like our opinion to be taken seriously, when making the final decision about this plan.

Thank you for your time.
Your sincerely

Comments: The author of this letter has managed to fully develop an argument with appropriate supporting details. In both main body paragraphs the author provides reasons and arguments that illustrate his point of view. Ideas are appropriately and clearly organized. Good command of an appropriate range of simple and complex structures (“The extension of the school day will not only affect the teachers and the students but also their families”). Rich vocabulary used appropriately (… “affect the mood…, …desire for…, …participate in…, due to obligations…,... gain knowledge…” ). Some occasional errors do not affect comprehension.
Dear Editor,

I'm a 16-year-old student and I want to express my opinion about the article I have read in your newspaper about the increase in the schoolday and extending summer vacation.

I strongly believe that this decision will fairly generate reactions from the students. Personally I believe that if we want to solve this problem we should discuss it and express our opinion first because when you force people to something nothing can be achieved. In other words we ought to all agree.

This decision can unfortunately affect students not only physically but mentally too. Students are going to be more tired and stressed because of their strict program. As a result many students will lose their lessons and they will become indifferent and not learn anything.

To sum up, the ministry should think about this decision and the negative result that it will generate to students. I hope my letter will be taken under serious consideration.

Sincerely

Commentary on the essay by the Center for Applied Linguistics and Language Studies, Hellenic American Union:

Comments: The author of this letter has managed to fully develop an argument with appropriate supporting details. In both main body paragraphs the author provides reasons and arguments that illustrate his point of view. Ideas are appropriately and clearly organized. Good command of an appropriate range of simple and complex structures (“Personally I believe that if we want to solve this problem we should discuss it and express our opinion first because when you force people to something nothing can be achieved”). Rich vocabulary used appropriately (“…generate reactions…, …force people…, …nothing can be achieved…, strict program…, …become indifferent…”). Some occasional errors do not affect comprehension.
Dear Editor,

I’m Nicky and I’m the representative of my school class. I’m writing to your newspaper, to express my opinion and my classmates’ opinion about the length of school day. I believe that it is wrong to length the school day by one hour. The school day is now 7 hours. Every student has 7 hours lessons and after the school has extra lessons in home if they want to have good grades to go after at a university.

That happens because the quality of education isn’t good. From the start of school year we haven’t teachers for all the lessons. The few teachers that we have don’t want to teach, they are bored and that is a serious reason that all the students have extra hours lesson at home.

I think that a plus hour in school day can’t fix all these problems. A student will spend one more hour in school with bad education, nothing more. My opinion about that is to fix the school program, to find right teachers and capable to teach and then to think again about a plus hour.

Sincerely

Commentary on the essay by the Center for Applied Linguistics and Language Studies, Hellenic American Union:

Comments: The author of this letter has managed to adequately develop an argument. In the first main point paragraph the author states and explains his opinion. In the second main body paragraph the author focuses on the root of the problem. Ideas are clearly and adequately organized. The author displays a sufficient range of grammar and vocabulary to accomplish the task (“The few teachers that we have don’t want to teach, they are bored and that is a serious reason that all the students have extra hours lesson at home”). Errors in grammar are noticeable but do not interfere with reader’s comprehension (“…if they want to have good grades to go after at a university”).

Dear Editor,

I am a student and I am writing because I read an article about a decision to extend the school day by one hour. So, I would like to give my views on this subject.

It’s very difficult for the teachers and for us the students to stay an hour longer at the school. After a lot of exams and an exciting school day, it will be hard for us to stay focused one more hour.

I would also like to say, that it will be difficult even for our parents. They have organized there day to come and pick us from the school on a specific time, and a decision like this will be strongly against there program of the day.

In conclusion, this decision is unfortunately impossible for all as to get used to. For that reason you should think about it carefully.

Yours Sincerely

Commentary on the essay by the Center for Applied Linguistics and Language Studies, Hellenic American Union:

Comments: The author of this letter has managed to adequately develop an argument. In both main body paragraphs the author provides reasons and arguments to illustrate his point of view. Ideas are clearly and adequately organized although connectors are sometimes mechanically used (“I would also like to say…”). The author displays a sufficient range of grammar and vocabulary to accomplish the task (“After a lot of exams and an exciting school day, it will be hard for us to stay focused one more hour”). Errors in grammar are noticeable but do not interfere with reader’s comprehension (“…this decision is unfortunately impossible for all as to get used to”).
Dear Editor,
I read your announcement and I realize what the point of this Education change is. The Ministry of Education wants to increase the school day by one hour and in return for the longer school day the ministry will extend summer vacation by one week. The new change will be in place by the next school year. I represent the opinion of my classmates, therefore I going to tell specific what our opinion is about this announcement.

To begin with I know that many people like parents and teachers will probably agree with this announcement because they think that it will be an effective solution in Education for the entire student community. And it will give them knowledge to face problem in their life's and to make their education better.

Our opinion about this fact is that the education problem can not be solved by adding extra hours. We believe it is not a matter of quantity but quality. Therefore the Ministry of Education must take care and improve those teachers that teach in classes and in this way it will probably solve the problem without adding extra hours. With all my respect I believe if you follow my suggestion it will not probably be necessary to follow the Ministry of Education schedule.

Thankfully

ECCE Benchmark Letter: C

Dear Editor,
I am Elena, I am a sixteen-year-old high school student. Me and my classmates read the article and discussed it and we would want to express our opinion about the lenght of school day.

First of all, schools help us to learn many things, make us become better and right people and give us the opportunity to do many sports and arts as they provide us with facilities. But we don’t consider the decision of the Ministry of Education to make the school day longer and extend summer vacation by one week, right because we need time with our families we need to do other things such as go to the cinema or even stay at our home and relax. And if the Ministry of Education does this, we will not have the time to do all these things which we need.

Maybe, if you extend the school day, you will improve the level of education in our country but if the children want to study, they can do it at heir house and it isn’t necessary to change the school programme. Our country don’t need only good students and scientists, it also needs good and capable people.

These are the ideas of a sixteen-year-old student about the length of the school day and how students feel about the decision announced in the article. We hope you will publish our letter and think about our opinion.

With respect
First high-school

Commentary on the essay by the Center for Applied Linguistics and Language Studies, Hellenic American Union:

Comments: The author of this letter has managed to adequately develop an argument. In both main body paragraphs the author provides reasons and arguments to illustrate his point of view. Ideas are clearly and adequately organized. The author displays a sufficient range of grammar and vocabulary to accomplish the task (“schools help us to learn many things, make us become better and right people and give us the opportunity to do many sports and arts as they provide us with facilities”). Errors in grammar are noticeable but do not interfere with reader’s comprehension (“...Our country don’t need only good students and scientists, it also needs good and capable people”).
ECCE Benchmark Letter: C

Commentary on the essay by the Center for Applied Linguistics and Language Studies, Hellenic American Union:

Comments: The author of this letter has managed to adequately develop an argument although at points he relies on the prompt for content. In both main body paragraphs the author provides reasons and arguments to illustrate his point of view. In the second main body paragraph the author suggests an alternative solution that could help solve the problem. Ideas are clearly and adequately organized although some standard connectors are used appropriately but somewhat mechanically (“To begin with...”). The author displays a sufficient range of grammar and vocabulary to accomplish the task (“To begin with I know that many people like parents and teachers will probably agree with this announcement because they think that it will be an effective solution in Education for the entire student community”) Errors in grammar are noticeable but do not interfere with reader’s comprehension.

Dear Editor,

My name is Maria and I represent my class. We read your article in the topic newspaper about the decision to be increased the school day by one hour. So we decided with my classmates to express our opinion about this.

First of all, I believe that in many countries there is the belief that the children do not spend enough time in school. This belief is and in my country. But, unfortunately some teachers, students and parents are strongly against the longer school day. I believe that they disagree with this because a lot of children need free time for themselves to do other things. Furthermore, there are many families who have already planned their everyday programme and something like this can disturbed their plans. Also, there are many who believe that one extra hour will not change the problem of education and is not enough to improve the poor students.

From my point of view, I believe that it would be a good idea if this decision could be done. Firstly, the poor students can benefit from that and they can be more useful in the society. Also I think that one extra hour can improve the quality of education in my country.

Finally, I think that the knowledge is power and I wish the better for me and all the students.

Yours faithfully,

Commentary on the essay by the Center for Applied Linguistics and Language Studies, Hellenic American Union:

Comments: The author of this letter has managed to adequately develop an argument. In the first main body paragraph the author shows acknowledgement of the opposing point of view. In the second main body paragraph the author expresses his own opinion. Ideas are clearly and adequately organized although some standard connectors are used appropriately but somewhat mechanically (“First of all...”). The author displays a sufficient range of grammar and vocabulary to accomplish the task (“But, unfortunately some teachers, students and parents are strongly against the longer school day. I believe that they disagree with this because a lot of children need free time for themselves to do other things”). Errors in grammar and vocabulary are noticeable but do not interfere with reader’s comprehension (“...We read your article in the topic newspaper about the decision to be increased the school day by one hour”).
Dear Editor,

I read the article about “the length of school day to be increased”. I am a teacher in a highschool and I represent my class. I discuss the article with my students and I want to give you some advice in my own experience.

At first, many people believe that there are many students who are weak and poor and they don't have good education. Many other people believe that the society wants people who are educated and they specialized. All these means that the students need to increase the school day by one hour.

In my opinion, I believe that children need free time for themselves. They want to relax, to play games, and rest. Also one extra hour per day isn't enough for the children to improve their education. Also many families arrange their works every day and they have already planned their programmes.

In conclusion, I think the one extra hour is too tired for the students. The students have many interest in their life. I think they want free time.

Your,

Commentary on the essay by the Center for Applied Linguistics and Language Studies, Hellenic American Union:

Comments: The author of this letter has managed to adequately develop an argument. In the first main body paragraph the author shows acknowledgement of the opposing point of view. In the second main body paragraph the author expresses his own opinion. Ideas are clearly and adequately organized although some standard connectors are used appropriately but somewhat mechanically (“At first…”). The author displays a sufficient range of grammar and vocabulary to accomplish the task (“But, unfortunately some teachers, students and parents are strongly against the longer school day. I believe that they disagree with this because a lot of children need free time for themselves to do other things”). Errors in grammar are noticeable but do not interfere with reader's comprehension (“...In conclusion, I think the one extra hour is too tired for the students. The students have many interest in their life”).
Dear Editor,

   My name is Stamoulakis Georgia and I represent my class. Our classmates disagree with the Ministry of Education, because has decided to increase the school day by one hour. The Ministry of Education believe how we'll have more summer vacation but we believe the summer vacation is a longer is a longer.

   On the other hand to increase the school day by one hour in my opinion its difficult for us. Because we have hard work after the school and we can't spent time on sports or hobbies etc.

I think we can cover the material in a better way. In addition more hours at school might be boring for the students. Finally we are strongly against the school day.

Sincerely yours

Comments: This letter is short and only minimally developed. Organization is adequate. Connectors are appropriately but mechanically used (“On the other hand…, In addition…”). There are also numerous basic language errors and they cause confusion (“The Ministry of Education believe how we’ll have more summer vacation but we believe the summer vacation is a longer is a longer”).