

**TCAP Writing Pilot**  
**TCAP/WA**

**DIRECTIONS**

**In a few moments, you will see a passage(s) and a prompt. You are to plan and write an essay about the passage(s) according to the instructions provided in the prompt. This activity will show how well you write. Express your thoughts clearly and make your writing interesting to the reader. Your essay will be scored as a rough draft, but you should watch for careless errors.**

**Before writing, spend some time reading the passage(s), thinking about the prompt, and planning your thoughts.**

**WRITE ONLY ON THE PROMPT AND PASSAGE(S) YOU ARE GIVEN.**

**The time you have for writing is 60 minutes.**

**PROMPT N – GRADE 8 WRITING ASSESSMENT  
TENNESSEE COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT PROGRAM (TCAP)  
2012 PILOT TEST**

In the following passage, Ralph Waldo Emerson expresses his views about how advanced technology hinders society.

**Self-Reliance**  
**from *Essays: First Series***  
by Ralph Waldo Emerson

It is easy to see that a greater self-reliance—a new respect for the divinity in man—must work a revolution in all the . . . relations of men; . . . in their education; in their pursuits; their modes of living. . . .

4. As our Religion, our Education, our Art look abroad, so does our spirit of society. All men plume themselves on<sup>1</sup> the improvement of society, and no man improves.

Society never advances. It recedes as fast on one side as it gains on the other. Its progress is only apparent like the workers of a treadmill. It undergoes continual changes . . . it is civilized . . . it is rich, it is scientific; but this change is not amelioration.<sup>2</sup> For every thing that is given something is taken. Society acquires new arts and loses old instincts. . . .

The civilized man has built a coach, but has lost the use of his feet. He is supported on crutches, but lacks so much support of the muscle. He has got a fine Geneva watch,<sup>3</sup> but he has lost the skill to tell the hour by the sun. A Greenwich nautical almanac<sup>4</sup> he has, and so being sure of the information when he wants it, the man in the street does not know a star in the sky. The solstice<sup>5</sup> he does not observe; the equinox<sup>6</sup> he knows as little; and the whole bright calendar of the year is without a dial in his mind. His notebooks impair his memory; his libraries overload his wit; the insurance-office increases the number of accidents; and it may be a question whether machinery does not encumber;<sup>7</sup> whether we have not lost by refinement some energy. . . .

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<sup>1</sup> **plume themselves on:** take pride in

<sup>2</sup> **amelioration:** improvement

<sup>3</sup> **Geneva watch:** expensive timepiece

<sup>4</sup> **Greenwich nautical almanac:** a book that calculated longitude at sea based on distance from the moon

<sup>5</sup> **solstice:** time of year when the sun is farthest from the equator

<sup>6</sup> **equinox:** time of year when the sun crosses the equator

<sup>7</sup> **encumber:** hinder

The arts and inventions of each period are only its costume and do not invigorate men.  
The harm of the improved machinery may compensate its good. . . .

Society is a wave. The wave moves onward, but the water of which it is composed does not.

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“Self-Reliance,” from *Essays: First Series*, by Ralph Waldo Emerson. Public Domain.

**READ THIS WRITING PROMPT CAREFULLY BEFORE YOU BEGIN YOUR WRITING.**

### **Technological Advancement**

**Write an essay in which you delineate Emerson’s claims that technological advancement sometimes hinders society by increasing people’s reliance on machines. Evaluate Emerson’s arguments and specific claims, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient. Draw evidence from the passage to support your analysis. Develop your topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, concrete details, or other information and examples. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling in your response.**

You may use the space below for prewriting. However, only the lined pages of your answer document will be scored. You will have a time limit of 60 minutes.

**This writing prompt must be returned with all test material.**