

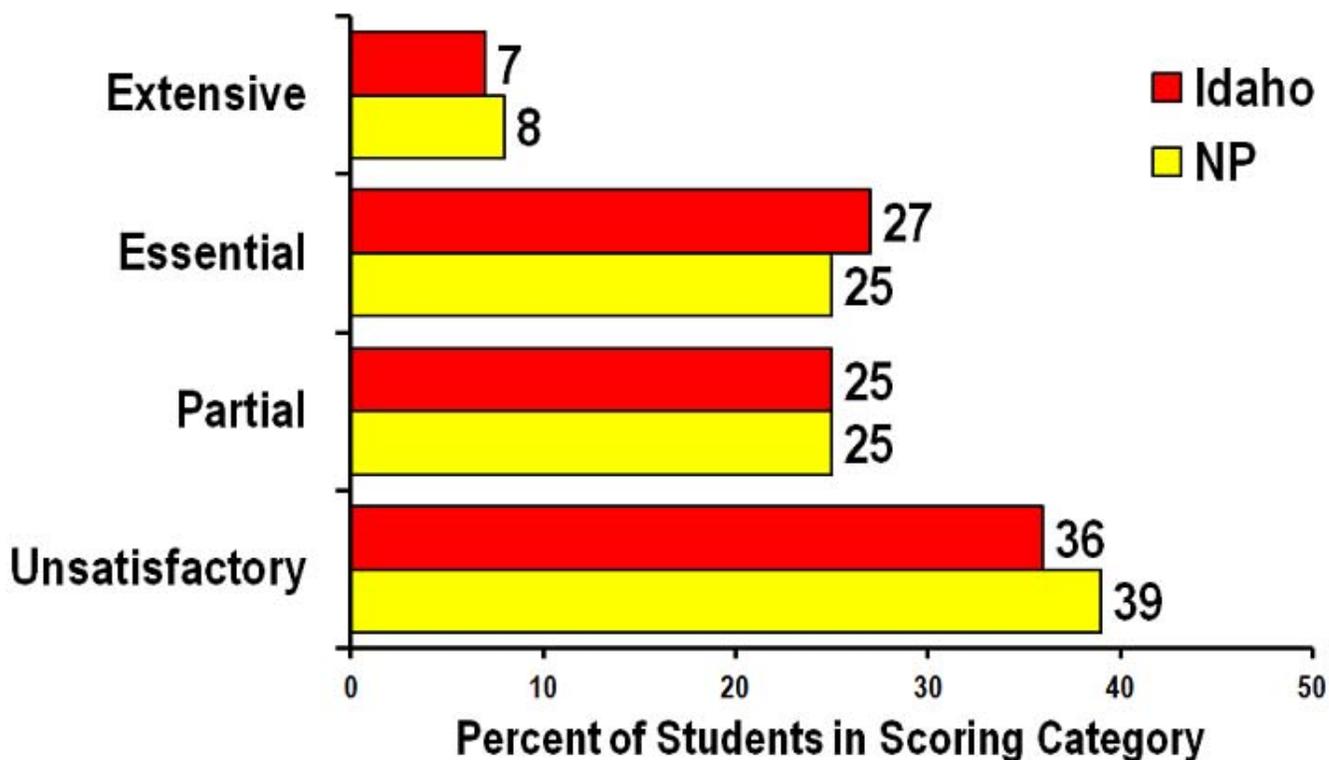
NAEP 2013 Reading for Information, Grade 8  
 Extended Constructed Response Item  
 Idaho vs. Nation’s Public Schools



December 8, 2013

NAEP uses a mixture of item types, including multiple-choice and constructed response. This snapshot looks at the performance of eighth-grade public school students in Idaho and across the nation on one extended constructed response item. The item was released with NAEP 2013 reading results. A graph displaying the 2013 results, the item, the article, and the scoring guide follow.

**NAEP 2013 Reading for Information, Grade 8**  
**Evaluate Persuasiveness of Ending**  
 Extended Constructed Response



On Page 2/4: The test item about evaluating the persuasiveness of ending in relation to the rest of the essay as it was presented to eighth-grade students. This reading-for-information extended constructed response item (Block R4 Question #6) was released to the public with the NAEP 2013 reading results.

On page 2/4: The article entitled “FUN” by *Suzanne Britt Jordan*, released 2013.

On Page 4/4: The NAEP scoring guide for Block M6 Question #16

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**Grade 8 Reading for Information Extended Constructed Response Item**  
**Evaluate Persuasiveness of Ending in Relation to the Rest of the Essay**  
**Block R4 Question #6 Released with NAEP 2013 Reading Results**  
**Content Area: Informational -- Cognitive Target: Critique/Evaluate**

16. The author ends the essay with a childhood story. Does the childhood story do a better job persuading readers of the author's point than the other parts of the essay? Explain why or why not.

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**FUN** *by Suzanne Britt Jordan*

Fun is hard to have.

Fun is a rare jewel.

Somewhere along the line people got the modern idea that fun was there for the asking, that people deserved fun, that if we didn't have a little fun every day we would turn into (sakes alive!) puritans.

"Was it fun?" became the question that overshadowed all other questions: good questions like: Was it moral? Was it kind? Was it honest? Was it beneficial? Was it generous? Was it necessary? And (my favorite) was it selfless?

When the pleasure got to be the main thing, the fun fetish was sure to follow. Everything was supposed to be fun. If it wasn't fun, then we were going to make it fun, or else.

Think of all the things that got the reputation of being fun. Family outings were supposed to be fun. Education was supposed to be fun. Work was supposed to be fun. Walt Disney was supposed to be fun. Church was supposed to be fun. Staying fit was supposed to be fun.

Just to make sure that everybody knew how much fun we were having, we put happy faces on flunking test papers, dirty bumpers, sticky refrigerator doors, bathroom mirrors.

If a kid, looking at his very happy parents traipsing through that very happy Disney World, said, "This ain't fun, ma," his ma's heart sank. She wondered where she had gone wrong. Everybody told her what fun family outings to Disney World would be. Golly gee, what was the matter?

Fun got to be such a big thing that everybody started to look for more and more thrilling ways to supply it. One way was to step up the level of danger so that you could be sure that, no matter what, you would manage to have a little fun.

Television commercials brought a lot of fun and fun-loving folks into the picture. Everything that people in those commercials did looked like fun: taking Polaroid snapshots, buying insurance, mopping the floor, bowling, taking aspirin. The more commercials people watched, the more they wondered when the fun would start in their own lives. It was pretty depressing.

Big occasions were supposed to be fun. Christmas, Thanksgiving and Easter were obviously supposed to be fun. Your wedding day was supposed to be fun. Your honeymoon was supposed to be the epitome of fundom. And so we ended up going through every Big Event we ever celebrated, waiting for the fun to start.

It occurred to me, while I was sitting around waiting for the fun to start, that not much is, and that I should tell you just in case you're worried about your fun capacity.

I don't mean to put a damper on things. I just mean we ought to treat fun reverently. It is a mystery. It cannot be caught like a virus. It cannot be trapped like an animal. The god of mirth is paying us back for all those years of thinking fun was everywhere by refusing to come to our party. I don't want to blaspheme fun anymore. When fun comes in on little dancing feet, you probably won't be expecting it. In fact, I bet it comes when you're doing your duty, your job, or your work. It may even come on a Tuesday.

I remember one day, long ago, on which I had an especially good time. Pam Davis and I walked to the College Village drug store one Saturday morning to buy some candy. We were about 12 years old. She got her Bit-O-Honey. I got my malted milk balls, chocolate stars, Chunkys, and a small bag of M & M's. We started back to her house. I was going to spend the night. We had the whole day to look forward to. We had plenty of candy. It was a long way to Pam's house but every time we got weary Pam would put her hand over her eyes, scan the horizon like a sailor and say, "Oughta reach home by nightfall," at which point the two of us would laugh until we thought we couldn't stand it another minute. Then after we got calm, she'd say it again. You should have been there. It was the kind of day and friendship and occasion that made me deeply regretful that I had to grow up.

It was fun.

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## Scoring Guide & Category Description for 2013 Block R4 Question #6

### Extensive

Responses at this level explain whether the childhood story does a better job persuading readers of the author's point than the other parts of the essay. Responses discuss the persuasiveness of both the story and other part(s) of the essay.

- It's persuasive because it gives an actual example of what real fun is as opposed to just listing things that aren't fun like in the earlier part of the essay.
- I don't think it does a better job. It just aids in getting the author's point across. Where some people might relate more to the reference to TV commercials, others might relate more to the fun in the childhood story.

### Essential

Responses at this level discuss the persuasiveness of either the story OR other part(s) of the essay but not both.

- The story convinces readers because it gives a personal example they can relate to.
- The rest of the article is better because it has more specifics.
- Yes, by showing the good times she had with her friend as a young girl, the author allows people to better understand that a small outing can be fun even when you are not expecting it.

### Partial

Responses at this level may state the author's main point about fun or may discuss the essay in relation to the author's main point, but do not discuss the persuasiveness of any part of the essay.

- Real fun can't be planned for.
- It shows what real fun is.
- When the author ends with a childhood story it explains what real fun is. Fun comes when you are not looking for it or trying to make it. Spending a lot of money, traveling, or holidays are not the only ways to have fun.

### Unsatisfactory

Responses at this level may provide irrelevant details or personal opinions or simply repeat the question.

- In the story Jordan and her friend have a fun time going to buy candy and joking around.
- Commercials show people having fun.
- It tells a lot about having fun.
- Yes, because it is better than the rest of the essay.