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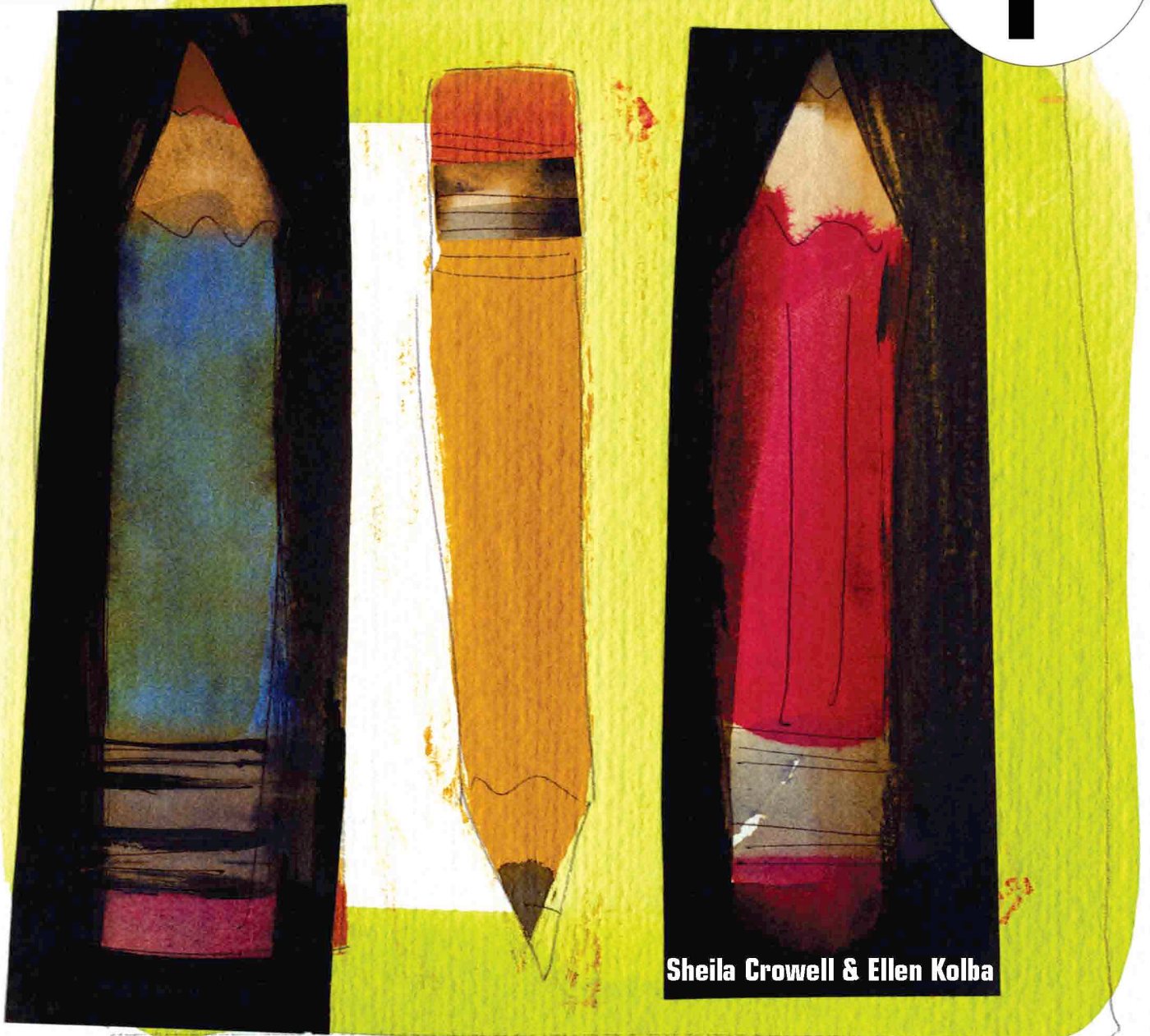


# Write It Out

*Mastering Short and Extended Responses  
to Open-Ended Questions*

LEVEL

**F**



Sheila Crowell & Ellen Kolba

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# Lesson 1

## What Makes a Good Answer?

Read this informative article. The question on the next page asks you to identify the main idea and the supporting details.

### Election Day

Today is Election Day—a day we get to choose a new mayor, or a new senator, or even a new president. Kids are not allowed to vote until they turn 18. Then they are considered adults, and they have the right to vote. Voting is important because it means we get to choose who we want to represent us in the state or national government.

Who votes in your family? Do both adult men and adult women vote? It may be hard to believe, but a hundred years ago, very few women could vote in national elections in the United States. They were not allowed to! The federal (or national) government, as well as most state governments, felt that women weren't important enough to vote. The men ruled, and the men held public office, so why should women vote?

Some states did give women limited voting rights. For instance, they could vote in city elections, but not in state elections. Or they could vote for the school board or the library board, but they had no say in who would be president.

A growing number of states in the West began to allow women to vote in all elections. In Wyoming in 1869, for example, women could help elect a president, senator, or governor. By 1914, women in eleven more states had unlimited voting rights. They also had the right to run for office. In 1916, Jeanette Rankin of Montana was elected to the House of Representatives. She was the first woman in this country to hold such a high office.

In 1920, no matter where they lived, all women could vote. In that year, the United States Constitution was amended, or added to, so that all American women had the right to vote.



*The main idea is expressed in this paragraph.*

*The remaining paragraphs are loaded with supporting details.*

**Briefly summarize the selection. Include details from the selection in your answer.**

### William's Answer:

William wrote a successful answer to this question. Read what he wrote, then answer the questions that follow. They will help you understand what made his answer so successful.

The main idea of this selection is that women in the United States didn't always have the right to vote. At first, they were only allowed to vote in some kinds of elections. Then some states let women vote in all elections. They could vote for president in the West. They could even run for office in the West. However, it wasn't until 1920 that all American women could vote in all elections.

#### HINT!

The test scorers look for these features:

- \* A statement of the main idea of your summary.
- \* Details from the selection that support your main idea.
- \* Complete, correct, and interesting sentences.

### What Makes William's Answer Work?

William's answer includes the features the test scorers look for:

- ✓ He clearly states the main idea.
- ✓ He includes supporting details that are on target.
- ✓ His sentences are correct, and he has arranged them in an order that makes sense.
- ✓ He demonstrates that he has read both the question and the reading selection very carefully.

Now let's look at William's answer more closely to see why it is successful.

1. William states the main idea.

**In which sentence does William state the main idea? Write William's main-idea sentence here.**

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2. William summarizes the selection by selecting the key ideas. Here is the first key idea he includes: "At first, they were only allowed to vote in some kinds of elections."

**What is the next key idea in his answer? Write William's sentence here.**

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3. William also includes two details from the selection to support this key idea.

**Find one detail that he includes. Write William's sentence here.**

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4. William's facts are arranged in a logical order. They are ordered in time sequence, or chronologically.

**What fact does William give last? Write William's sentence here.**

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# Tools & Tips

When you are asked to **summarize** a selection, it is important to put the ideas in a clear, logical order. One way is to use **chronological (time) order** the way William did. William’s organization is clear because the words he used connected his ideas:

*At first ...*

*Then ...*

*... it wasn’t until 1920 ...*

You can also arrange ideas in their **order of importance**. Usually, the most important idea comes first, as in this example:

*American women have been fighting for their rights since 1776. Remember that the Declaration of Independence tells us that all men are created equal. It doesn’t say anything about women.*

*The right to vote may be the most important of these rights. This battle lasted more than 150 years.*

*Women also fought for the right to have an education. The first co-educational college was founded in 1833.*

1. What other words could you use to show time order?

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2. What other words could you use to show the order of importance?

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