ECR: STAAR → SST

THE ESSAY ON THE NEW TEST

HOUSE BILL 8 · WHAT CHANGES FOR THE ECR · FIRST SST ESSAY: APRIL 2028

APRIL
ITS OWN TEST DAY

The RLA writing component moves to **April 1–15**. The rest of the RLA EOY is given **May 1–30**. Both are combined into one RLA score.

1
ESSAY, NO SCRs

The RLA EOY includes **a single extended constructed response**. Short constructed responses are eliminated.

10 → 6
POINTS ON THE TEST

The ECR is now **one 6-point question**. On STAAR the essay was worth 10.

THE RUBRIC GOT SMALLER — 5 SCORE POINTS BECOME 3

SCORED ON	STAAR through 2027	SST 2028 onward
Organization and Development of Ideas	0–3	0–2
Conventions	0–2	0–1
RUBRIC TOTAL	5	3
POINTS ON THE TEST	10	6

On STAAR, two scorers each applied the 5-point rubric and the scores were summed, so an essay could earn up to 10 points. On SST, the blueprints list the ECR as one 6-point question.

2 · 1 · 0
IDEAS

Controlling idea, organization, evidence, and expression are judged together for **2, 1, or 0**.

1 · 0
CONVENTIONS

All or nothing. Sentence construction, punctuation, capitalization, grammar, and spelling at grade level.

0
WHEN A ZERO IS GIVEN

TEA states zero scores will be **reserved for only blank or nonsense responses**.

WHAT ELSE RLA TEACHERS SHOULD KNOW

Still 100% text based
Evidence may be directly quoted or paraphrased from the assessed selection.

A lighter reading load
SST passages run about half the length of STAAR passages.

Two rubrics, two grade bands
Informational and Argumentative — titled Argumentative/Opinion in grades 3–5 — for grades 3–5 and 6–English I.

Letters are still possible
Grades 6–English I may be asked to respond by writing a letter (correspondence) to a specific audience.

Counterargument still counts
For grade 8 and English I argumentative, a counterargument must be identified and addressed to earn the 2.

Short constructed responses are gone
SCRs are eliminated. Every other item on the RLA EOY is machine scored.

The EOY test is not adaptive
BOY and MOY adjust to each student, but the EOY is static and linear — every student receives the same assessment. EOY questions will be released like STAAR's; BOY and MOY questions will not.

Free automatic rescore
If one more point would move a student to the next performance level, TEA rescores by hand at no cost.

English II is done
The English II EOC ends, so the ECR runs grades 3–8 and English I.

December & June English I
English I in December and June is a single, combined SST assessment.

Heads up: The SST writing rubrics and blueprints are posted by TEA as **DRAFT** (August 2026) and take effect with the **spring 2028** administration. The April and May testing windows and the automatic rescore are **set in law** (TEC §39.02301); the end of the English II EOC is **required by HB 8**. The last STAAR is spring 2027 for grades 3–8 and December 2027 for EOC.

Source: Texas Education Agency · House Bill 8 Student Assessment · SST rubrics, blueprints & HB 8 FAQ (tea.texas.gov)

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