

# INSTRUCTIONS

This assessment has been designed to measure your skills in: critical thinking, analytic reasoning, problem solving, and written communication.

You will submit a one-to-two page essay, based on the scenario described here. Your own personal experiences and values are important and will influence what you write, but, you should base your essay only on the evidence provided in the documents.

Your essay should be in either Arial font (size 11) or Times New Roman font (size 12). Further, your essay should use one-inch margins, use 1.5 or double spacing, and contain no more than 1,200 words. Please do not write on any of the documents or other pages provided in this assessment.

In your essay, you should address the positions (see below) made by Mr. Franklin, the organization's leader. Be sure to carefully read the documents for any support or criticism of Mr. Franklin's positions and look for important contextual information there as well.

You should also 1) evaluate the strength or reasonableness of Mr. Franklin's arguments for his positions, 2) suggest ways to improve any of his weak or invalid arguments, and 3) cite the evidence, from the documents, that supports your evaluations of Mr. Franklin's positions.

# SCENARIO

You just started working for one of your university's newspapers. You and Sheila, a more experienced reporter, have been assigned to work together on this project; if you do well in the first month, Sheila will train you to take her position when this school year ends and she graduates. Sheila has given you a handful of documents that she's already collected. She's asked you to write an essay, a little like what you might write if you were doing a report for a class, based only on these documents, and have it ready for your next meeting. She'll go over it with you, and from your analysis, she and you will work together on a story for the paper. You want to do a good job because you're really looking forward to working on the paper this year and next year.

This past summer, an organization in support of the legalization of marijuana held meetings in your college town where they distributed flyers, gave speeches, and responded to both criticisms and questions from others. Sheila has asked you to look over a handful of their (and others') documents and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of this organization's leader's positions. Sheila has made clear that the positions described below must be addressed in the article.

# POSITIONS

## **Position 1: People desire marijuana's legalization and the governor opposes it**

James Franklin, director of *Make Pot Legal Now!*, the pro-legalization organization, implied that Nancy Harrison, the state's governor, opposed legalization when he replied to a local reporter's question with "Ms. Harrison's obstructionist policies will only lead to greater dissatisfaction for the people of Midland."

## **Position 2: Marijuana's legalization will have beneficial social and economic effects**

Mr. Franklin claimed that Midland's taxpayers shouldn't spend their tax dollars paying police, prosecutors and judges on marijuana-related charges, arrests and cases. Mr. Franklin cited statistics which he claims show that when marijuana is decriminalized or made legal, the crime rates drop in the jurisdictions where this happens.

Check that you have all five of the associated documents (labeled A through E) before you begin, and please remember not to write on any of these pages.