



## CUNYASSESSMENT TEST IN WRITING (CATW) Practice 6

Read the passage below and write an essay responding to the ideas it presents. In your essay, be sure to summarize the passage in your own words, stating the author's most important ideas. Develop your essay by identifying one idea in the passage that you feel is especially significant, and explain its significance. Support your claims with evidence or examples drawn from what you have read, learned in school, and/or personally experienced.

### **Use of Slang in the Classroom**

The way students communicate with one another through social media and text messaging is making its way into high school classrooms. Slang terms such as IDK (I don't know), SMH (shaking my head), and BTW (by the way) have become common in student assignments, confusing some high school teachers who are unsure how to fix this problem. Terry Wood, a high school teacher, has seen a "dramatic decline" in the writing abilities of her students "due to Tweeting, Facebook, and texting."

According to a survey of 700 students ages 12 to 17, 85 percent of the students reported using a form of electronic communication, whether instant messaging, text messaging, or social media. Growing up in a technological era, high school students may be unaware that language shortcuts which may be fine to use in chatting as inappropriate in academic writing. In fact, 64 percent of students in the study reported accidentally using this form of slang in class assignments.

Some may say this trend is simply an evolution of language, but many teachers consider it a problem, and believe that writers using such "text speak" cannot communicate their ideas clearly.

While slang terms may be found mostly in the high school classroom, some colleges are receiving admissions essays that also use them, which could reduce chances of admission for the writers of these essays. Ananda Mitra, a professor and department chair, believes colleges will continue to place the responsibility on students to use formal language during the admissions process. This will require future prospective college students to be careful of the words they choose, or they "will not be admitted."

For now college officials continue to reject slang, but the future is unclear as more generations of students grow up with technology, and use language that embraces these language shortcuts.

Adapted from "How Slang Affects Students in the Classroom," by Ryan Lytle, *U.S. News and World Report*, June 13, 2011.