Writing Feedback
TERM 2 - 2025 | WEEK 6 - Writing | Year 5 Scholarship Essentials

Section 1:

#1 **"Traditional exams provide a standardized measure of student knowledge, ensuring that all learners are evaluated under consistent conditions. In contrast, PBAs can vary significantly based on students' access to resources, guidance, and external support. A 2021 report from the National Center for Fair & Open Testing found that over 70% of educators view traditional exams as a reliable way to assess core academic proficiency. This level of standardization is essential for maintaining objectivity and fairness across diverse student populations."**

Strengths:

- You've effectively contrasted traditional exams with PBAs, highlighting the standardisation aspect.
- Your inclusion of statistical evidence (70% of educators) strengthens your argument.

Unsupported fairness claim → While you mention that standardisation is "essential for maintaining objectivity and fairness," you don't fully explore how this fairness actually manifests in practice. What specific aspects of fairness are enhanced by standardisation? Consider the phrase "across diverse student populations" - how exactly does standardisation benefit different types of learners?

Traditional exams provide a standardised measure of student knowledge, ensuring consistent evaluation conditions for all learners. This standardisation particularly benefits students from disadvantaged backgrounds who might have limited resources at home for project work. The 2021 report from the National Center for Fair & Open Testing confirms that most educators (over 70%) view traditional exams as reliable for assessing core academic proficiency, as they create a level playing field where only in-class learning is tested.

#2 **"Furthermore, traditional exams help prepare students for future milestones. Standardized tests like the SAT, ACT, and professional licensure exams continue to play a pivotal role in college admissions and career advancement. Research from the Brookings Institution highlights a strong correlation between standardized test scores and long-term success, including higher college graduation rates and increased lifetime earnings. Without exposure to exam-style assessments, students may lack the skills and resilience needed to navigate these high-stakes situations."**

Strengths:

- You've made a practical connection between exams in school and future academic/career requirements.
- The reference to research from the Brookings Institution adds credibility to your argument.

Limited perspective on resilience → You mention that without exam experience, students "may lack the skills and resilience needed," but you don't explain what specific resilience skills exams develop. The phrase "high-stakes situations" is mentioned without exploring how exams uniquely prepare students for pressure beyond simply being familiar with the format.

Furthermore, traditional exams help students develop crucial test-taking strategies and emotional regulation skills needed throughout life. When sitting for timed assessments, students learn to manage anxiety, prioritise tasks, and perform under pressure—skills directly transferable to university entrance tests, job interviews, and workplace deadlines. The Brookings Institution research not only shows a correlation between test scores and future success but suggests these outcomes stem from the self-discipline and study habits that effective exam preparation instils in young learners.

#3 **"In conclusion, both traditional exams and project-based assessments serve important, though different, roles in modern education. A hybrid model that combines the structure and fairness of exams with the creativity and practical application of PBAs offers the most comprehensive approach to student assessment. By integrating both, educators can promote academic excellence while also preparing students for the complex challenges of the real world."**

Strengths:

- Your conclusion effectively summarises your balanced position on using both assessment methods.
- You've connected assessment approaches to both academic excellence and real-world preparation.

Vague implementation suggestions → While you advocate for a "hybrid model," you don't provide any practical examples of how this integration might work in reality. The phrase "combining the structure and fairness of exams with the creativity and practical application of PBAs" sounds good but lacks specific implementation strategies that teachers could actually use.

In conclusion, both assessment types serve vital educational purposes when thoughtfully combined. A practical hybrid approach might include term-time projects that develop research and collaboration skills, followed by end-of-unit exams testing individual mastery of core concepts. For example, in science, students could complete a group experiment project applying scientific methods, then individually sit an exam testing their understanding of the underlying principles. This balanced assessment strategy ensures students develop both fundamental knowledge and its practical application—preparing them for further study and future careers.

■ Your piece presents a well-structured argument for maintaining traditional exams alongside project-based assessments. However, you could strengthen your case by including specific examples of successful hybrid models in action. For instance, you might describe how a history class could combine a research project on a historical period with a traditional exam testing knowledge of key dates and figures. Also, your piece would benefit from addressing counterarguments more directly. When you

mention that PBAs foster creativity and critical thinking, explain why these benefits don't outweigh the drawbacks you identify. Additionally, consider adding student perspectives to balance the educator and institutional viewpoints you've included. What do students themselves say about these different assessment methods? You could also improve your argument by including a paragraph about how different subjects might require different balances of assessment types—perhaps mathematics needs more traditional testing while art benefits from project work. Your writing shows promise but needs more concrete examples and diverse perspectives to fully convince readers of your position.

Overall Score: 43/50

Section 2:

Should Schools Replace Traditional Exams with Project-Based Assessments?

As education evolves to meet the demands of the 21st century, educators increasingly debate whether traditional exams should be replaced by project-based assessments (PBAs). While PBAs foster creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration, they should not fully replace traditional exams. A balanced approach that incorporates both methods offers the most effective, equitable, and academically sound model of assessment. Fully eliminating exams could compromise fairness, undermine academic ~~rigor~~ [rigour], and leave students ill-prepared for future academic and professional challenges.

#1 Traditional exams provide a ~~standardized~~ [standardised] measure of student knowledge, ensuring that all learners are evaluated under consistent conditions. In contrast, PBAs can vary significantly based on students' access to resources, guidance, and external support. A 2021 report from the National Center for Fair & Open Testing found that over 70% of educators view traditional exams as a reliable way to assess core academic proficiency. This level of ~~standardization~~ [standardisation] is essential for maintaining objectivity and fairness across diverse student populations.

Exams also excel at measuring foundational skills, particularly in subjects like math, science, and grammar, where precision is critical. According to the ~~Organization~~ [Organisation] for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), students in countries that emphasize ~~standardized~~ [standardised] exams perform up to 20% better in mathematics and reading than those in systems that rely heavily on project-based methods. These findings suggest that exams are more effective in reinforcing essential academic competencies and maintaining high educational standards.

Academic integrity is another significant consideration. Because PBAs are often completed outside the classroom, they are more vulnerable to excessive external input. A 2022 study by the Education Policy Institute found that 40% of students admitted to receiving substantial help from parents or online sources when completing projects. In contrast, traditional exams are typically administered in

controlled settings, ~~minimizing~~ [minimising] opportunities for academic dishonesty and ensuring that assessments reflect a student's individual capabilities.

#2 Furthermore, traditional exams help prepare students for future milestones. ~~Standardized~~ [Standardised] tests like the SAT, ACT, and professional licensure exams continue to play a pivotal role in college admissions and career advancement. Research from the Brookings Institution highlights a strong correlation between ~~standardized~~ [standardised] test scores and long-term success, including higher college graduation rates and increased lifetime earnings. Without exposure to exam-style assessments, students may lack the skills and resilience needed to navigate these high-stakes situations.

That said, project-based assessments bring unique advantages. They encourage deep learning, foster engagement, and allow students to apply knowledge in real-world contexts. These qualities are especially valuable in cultivating skills such as teamwork, communication, and independent problem-solving—attributes that are increasingly vital in today's workforce. However, these benefits are ~~maximized~~ [maximised] when PBAs complement, rather than replace, traditional exams.

#3 In conclusion, both traditional exams and project-based assessments serve important, though different, roles in modern education. A hybrid model that combines the structure and fairness of exams with the creativity and practical application of PBAs offers the most comprehensive approach to student assessment. By integrating both, educators can promote academic excellence while also preparing students for the complex challenges of the real world.