

## **SAMPLE PROMPT**

### **Assignment 1: Use Passages A & B to respond to the following assignment.**

In a response of approximately 100-200 words, identify which author presents a more compelling argument. Your response must:

- Outline the specific claims made in each passage;
- Evaluate the validity, relevance, and sufficiency of evidence used to support each claim; and
- Include examples from both passages to support your evaluation

Your response should be written for an audience of educated adults. With the exception of appropriately identified quotations and paraphrases from the sources provided, your writing must be your own. The final version of your response should conform to the conventions of edited American English.

### **Assignment 2: Use Passage B and the Chart to respond to the following assignment.**

In a response of approximately 100-200 words, explain how the information presented in the Chart can be integrated with the author's central argument about the impact of providing unconditional handouts to the poor in Passage B. Your response must:

- Explain how specific information presented in the chart either supports or counters the author's claims, reasoning, and evidence with regard to unconditional handouts to the poor; and
- Include examples from the passage and the chart to support your explanation.

Your response should be written for an audience of educated adults. With the exception of appropriately identified quotations and paraphrases from the sources provided, your writing must be your own. The final version of your response should conform to the conventions of edited American English.

### **Assignment 3: Use Passages A and B to respond to the following assignment.**

Compared to Conditional Cash Transfers (CCTs), should funding for Unconditional Cash Transfers (UCTs) be expanded, be reduced, or remain the same?

In an essay in your own words of approximately 400–600 words, present a fully developed argument that introduces and supports a claim that assesses the impact of funding for unconditional handouts to the poor in developing countries. Make sure to address the question of whether UCT programming should be continued or discontinued.

- include a knowledgeable claim that demonstrates an understanding of the topic;
- use valid reasoning that draws on and extends the arguments in the sources provided;
- support your claim with relevant and sufficient evidence from all three sources; and
- anticipate and address at least one counterclaim.

Your essay should be written for an audience of educated adults. You must maintain an appropriate style and tone and use clear and precise language throughout. With the exception of appropriately identified quotations and paraphrases from the sources provided, your writing must be your own. The final version of your essay should conform to the conventions of edited American English.

## SAMPLE PROMPT

### Passage A Excerpts: *from* "The Case for Unconditional Handouts to the Poor" Source: *The Atlantic*

1 Morocco is one of the more developed countries in Africa, but only about half -- 56 percent -- of its population can read. Most schools there lack electricity, and many don't even have toilets. Most children living in the country's rural areas start primary school, but about 40 percent drop out before sixth grade... It's ranked 59 out of 69 countries in math and 64 out of 70 on science.

2 To nudge families to keep their children in school, researchers recently experimented with giving parents in the country's poorest districts small grants of between \$8 and \$10 per child each month. Some of them were told they'd only get paid if their child attended school regularly, but the others were simply handed money, told nothing, and sent on their way.

3 The researchers found that giving out money without any preconditions was more effective than asking families to do something in exchange for their bounty. "To the extent that conditionality had any impact, it was a negative one," they concluded.

4 A *New York Times* magazine story this week explores a similar theme: The rising trend of giving the poor cash transfers -- free money -- and hoping that it results in some positive action, like eating better or going to school or getting medical treatment. And despite our most pessimistic views of human nature, the *Times* found that in some cases, it actually works.

5 Mexico tried something similar on a large scale with its PROGRESA program in the late '90s, doling out handouts to millions of Mexican families. To their surprise, irresponsible parents didn't drink away the funds or fight over the best way to spend it. Instead, it pretty much just did what it was supposed to:

6 Researchers found that children in the cash program were more likely to stay in school, families were less likely to get sick and people ate a more healthful diet. Recipients also didn't tend to blow the money on booze or cigarettes, and many even invested a chunk of what they received. Today, more than six million Mexican families get cash transfers.

7 The difference between PROGRESA and one version of the program tested in Morocco is that the Mexican strategy came with conditions -- parents had to send their kids to school and for regular check-ups. The Morocco program, meanwhile, didn't require them to do anything.

8 While both versions of the Morocco program -- conditional and unconditional -- helped boost school enrollment figures, the unconditional grants were even more effective at getting kids enrolled and keeping them from dropping out than the kind that came with requirements. It was also cheaper, since administrators didn't need to keep track of students' attendance.

9 The program worked largely because it mitigated the families' financial difficulties. The parents had more money, so the children could go learn algebra instead of selling trinkets by the roadside..."People know what they need," writes the *Times*' Jason Goldstein. "And if they have money, they can buy it."

## SAMPLE PROMPT

**Passage B Excerpts: *from Pennies from Heaven: Giving money directly to poor people works surprisingly well. But it cannot deal with the deeper causes of poverty***

**Source: *The Economist*.**

*Up to this point, the author has been building background information on Unconditional Cash Transfers (UCTs).*

1 A different scheme [discussed above] has been running in northern Uganda for four years. The government gives lump sums of around \$10,000 to groups of 20 or so young people who club together to apply. Chris Blattman of Columbia University, New York, who has studied the programme, calls it “wildly successful”. Recipients spent a third of the money learning a trade (such as metalworking or tailoring) and much of the rest on tools and stock. They set up enterprises and work longer hours in their new trades. Average earnings rose by almost 50% in four years.

2 This scheme has a condition: applicants must submit a business plan. But it highlights the virtues of no-strings grants (UCTs). They work when lack of money is the main problem. The people who do best are those with the least to start with (in Uganda, that especially means poor women). In such conditions, the schemes provide better returns than job-training programmes that mainstream aid agencies favour. Remarkably, they even do better than secondary education, which pushes up wages in poor countries by 10-15% for each extra year of schooling. This may be because recipients know what they need better than donors do—a core advantage of no-strings schemes. They also outscore conditional transfers, because some families eligible for these fail to meet the conditions through no fault of their own (if they live too far from a school, for instance)...

3 Moreover, CCTs can focus on something which UCTs leave to chance: helping the next generation. Healthier, better educated children earn more throughout their lifetimes, so the requirement to attend school or clinics should cut future poverty. UCTs aim to reduce poverty now. So conditional and unconditional schemes are not always comparable. That said, a lot of effort has gone into making comparisons, and the results are now emerging. CCTs have their drawbacks but—at least where governments are concerned, and if you take a broad definition of poverty reduction to include health and education—they usually do a better job...

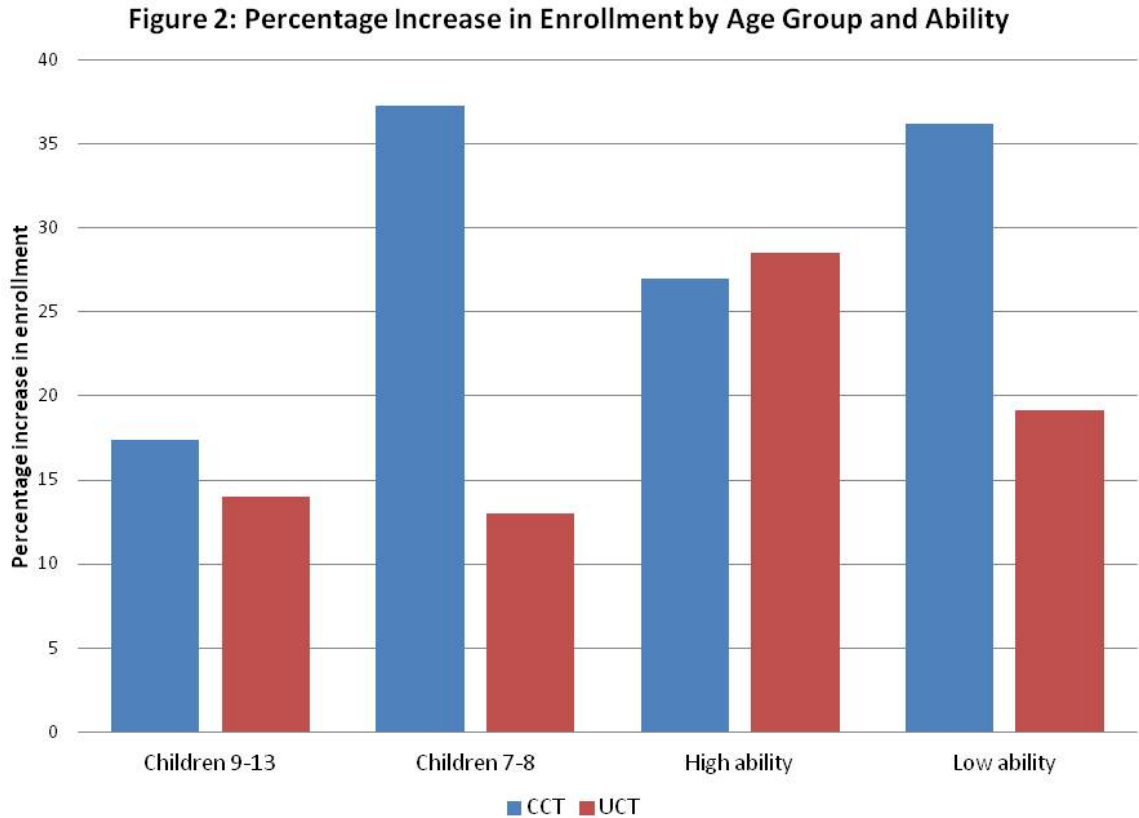
4 Sarah Baird of the University of Otago and three of her colleagues tried to look beyond individual cases to see if there were broader lessons. They studied 26 CCTs, five UCTs and four programmes that ran conditional and unconditional benefits in parallel (as in Ghana). They concluded that CCTs do more to raise educational outcomes than UCTs, and the stricter the conditions the better. School enrolment among families that got conditional grants rose by 41% on average in the various programmes; the increase among those that got unconditional grants was only 23%. If conditions were implicit or soft (eg, if recipients were simply encouraged to take children to school), enrolment merely rose by 25%. The big difference came when conditions were tough (eg, if school attendance was mandatory): that boosted enrolment by 60%, a big bang for the relatively few bucks involved.

5 In short, UCTs work better than almost anyone would have expected. They dent the stereotype of poor people as inherently feckless and ignorant. But CCTs are usually better still, especially when dealing with the root causes of poverty and, rather than just alleviating it, helping families escape it altogether.

## SAMPLE PROMPT

### CHART

Source: The World Bank



### Websites

- [For Which Children Do Conditions Matter in Conditional Cash Transfers? - article](#)
- [Pennies from heaven - article](#)
- [The Case for Unconditional Handouts to the Poor - article](#)