

Secondary

Independent Writing Prompts

Indiana
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Working Together for Student Success

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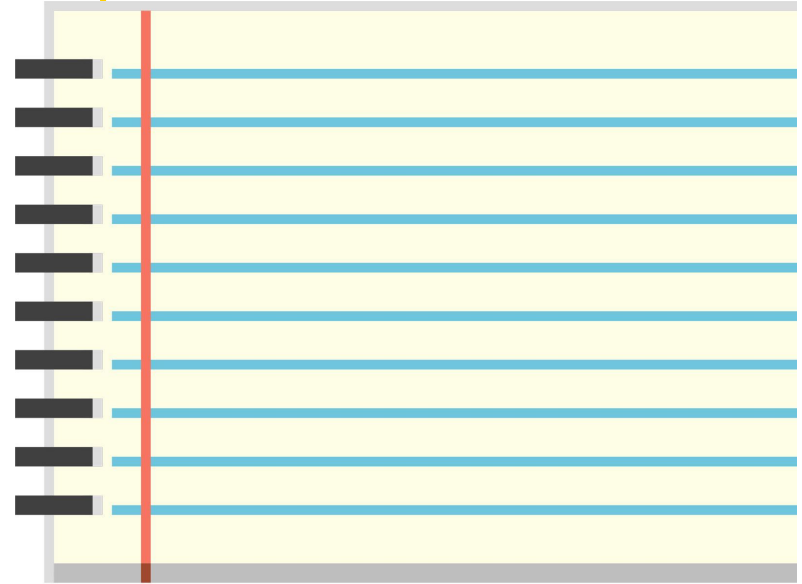
Tips for Using Writing Prompts

Writing prompts are often used in the completion of timed writing assessments. A student may encounter a prompt following a literature unit, on a final exam, or most commonly, on a standardized test. We encourage these as opportunities for students to practice coming up with an idea, organizing supporting details, and meeting grade level grammar and mechanics expectations. Time limits can be anywhere from 30-60 minutes.



Elements to Include

1. Introduction
 - a. Attention getter
 - b. Thesis statement
2. Body Paragraphs
 - a. Two-three per prompt
 - b. Transition words
 - c. Topic sentences
3. Conclusion
 - a. Restatement of thesis
 - b. Summarize main points



Support

Click the following link for support on how to approach a writing prompt to make it more accessible and easy to understand.

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1HjkJ_UYvPJvVVM_SpLCorV0LAYvaeUk3lrLp65rzFul/edit#slide=id.g7fe1626172_1_0



Prompts

- Every man who rises above the common level has received two educations: the first from his teachers; the second, more personal and important, from himself.” --Edward Gibbon.

Which education do you believe is most important; the education you have received inside the school system, or the education you have received outside the school system? Why? Write an essay in which you explain your point of view. Use specific examples, reasons, and details to develop and support your point of view.

- In the state of Indiana there are over hundreds of different languages spoken in public schools. Many students enroll in classes to learn a second language.

Do you think students should learn a language in addition to the language they already speak? Write an essay in which you explain your view. Use specific examples, reasons, and details to develop and support your point of view.



Prompts

- The environment has become one of the major challenges of the past forty years. Air and water pollution, wildlife conservation, and control of waste materials are major concerns. Many individuals and groups have strong feelings about these issues.

Do we have a responsibility to protect and preserve the environment? Why or why not? Give specific reasons to support your position.

- Many television shows have characters who are teenagers. Although the people who write and direct these shows are adults, they try to portray the teenagers realistically. Sometimes these portrayals do not seem real to teenagers.

Write about a television show in which you think teenagers are portrayed unrealistically. Tell your reader what traits or actions make these characters seem unrealistic.



Prompts

- In many novels, plays, and short stories, a character is challenged in some important way. As a result of the challenge, he or she changes for the good or for the bad. The kind of change reveals an idea the author wants you to understand. For example, when a character became happier at the end of a novel than he was at the beginning, the author may be showing you what goes into making someone happy.

Select one major character from a novel, TV show, or movie you have read/watched. Write an essay in which you describe how the character changes and tell what the author wants you to understand about the character as a result of the change. The reader of your essay is familiar with the novel, t.v. show, or movie you select.

- “It’s not whether you win or lose, it’s how you play the game.” --Vince Lombardi

Explain what point the author is making in the quotation. Explain why you agree or disagree with the author. Give specific examples, reasons, and details to develop and support your point of view.



Prompts

- “Sometimes we, ourselves, are our own worst enemies.”

From a novel, story, TV show, or movie select a character who seems to have been his or her own worst enemy. Show how the character was able or unable to overcome these problems. Tell why you think the character was able or unable to do so.

- In an effort to reduce drug use on its campuses, the school district is paying an outside firm for the use of drug-sniffing dogs. These dogs are randomly brought on each campus to sniff student cars, lockers, and backpacks.

In a multiparagraph essay, explain your position on this issue. Make sure the reader knows whether you support or oppose this policy. Support your thesis with specific examples and/or details.



Prompts

- We are all influenced by creative work found in our world.

Choose a creative work (e.g. film, music, book, art, or poem) that has had a significant influence on you. Describe the work and tell the reader why the work is important to you. Make sure the reader understands how the work has influenced you.

- The U.S. Postal Service has honored many individuals, from presidents to singers to cartoon characters, by placing their portraits on postage stamps. Whom would you nominate to honor with a postage stamp?

Write an essay explaining to the reader whom you would choose to be honored on a postage stamp. Explain why that person should be honored, and support your nomination with specific examples and details.



Works Cited

All prompts were taken from:

Gallagher, Kelly. *Teaching Adolescent Writers*. Stenhouse Publishers, 2006.

