

First Grade Prompts

Each prompt has a code. For example, the first eighth grade narrative prompt code is “N8A.” Please record the proper code on your essay. The top corner of each paper should include Student Name, Teacher (IST) Name, Date, Grade Level, and Prompt Code

Note: Please have first graders handwrite their prompts, and encourage them to write as much as they can themselves. First grade students often enjoy drawing a picture first and then writing about the picture. Most prompts have examples; however, please feel free to encourage your student to respond to the prompt in her or his own unique way.

Narrative

5 total

N1A: Create an “All About Me” book.

Pick a few things you like to do. Write about why you like doing those things. Draw pictures that go with what you are writing.

Examples: Do you love camping? Write about a time when you went camping with your family and draw a picture of the campsite. Do you have a pet? Write a story about your pet and draw a picture of you with your pet. Do you love to draw or paint? Write about what you love about drawing or painting.

N1B: Write a story about something you like to do with your best friend.

Write a story about something you and your best friend do together. Draw a picture of you and your friend doing that activity.

Examples: We can find lots of fun things to do with friends. Do you like to play at the park together? Write a story about playing at the park with your friend. Do you enjoy eating chocolate chip cookies that you help your friend bake? Write a story about making the cookies with your friend.

N1C: Write about a happy experience that you have had.

Draw a picture of an event that was a happy, exciting, or fun experience for you. Write a story about what happened and how it made you feel.

Examples: Was your birthday party last year a happy event? What happened at your party that was most wonderful? Or, have you been to an exciting place? Describe what happened when you went to that place. Why was it so exciting?

N1D: Write about a sad experience that you have had.

Draw a picture of an event that was a sad or scary experience for you. Write a story about what happened and how it made you feel.

Examples: Perhaps you had an accident and fell off of your bicycle. Write a story about how it happened. Was it scary? Maybe you lost a favorite toy or game. Write about losing the toy. Did it make you sad? Who helped you? What did you do to feel better?

N1E: *Write about a dream you had.*

Draw a picture of a dream you had. Then, write the story of your dream. What do you remember about the dream? Try to use as many of the five senses as you can to describe the dream. (What did you see in the dream? What did you hear in the dream? What did you smell in the dream? What did you taste in the dream? What did you touch in the dream?)

Expository/Descriptive**5 total**

E1A: *Describe and illustrate where you live.*

Draw a picture and write a few sentences describing the place where you live. Write what it looks like from the outside. Write about the different rooms, especially your own room.

Examples: What color is the outside painted? What special things are in your room? Do you have a special sea shell collection? A favorite stuffed animal? Do you share your room with a brother or sister?

E1B: *Describe and illustrate one of your parents or guardians.*

Draw a picture and write a few sentences about one of your parents or guardians. Describe your parent or guardian and write about what you like to do together.

Examples: What is your favorite thing about your parent or guardian? What does he or she look like? Does he or she help you with your schoolwork? Do you like to make dinner together? Do you like to go to the beach together and look in tide pools?

E1C: *Describe and illustrate a goal you have.*

Draw a picture of yourself accomplishing a goal. Then, write about why you have this goal.

Examples: Do you want to learn how to play basketball? Write about why you want to learn to play. Do you want to learn how to play the trumpet? Write about why you want to learn how to play the trumpet.

E1D: *Describe and illustrate a favorite place.*

Draw a picture of one of your favorite places. Write about the things you like to see and do when you go there.

Examples: Is there a favorite park where you and your family like to go to for picnics? Do you love the beach? How about your backyard? Pick one of your favorite places and paint a picture of it in words.

E1E: *Describe and illustrate your neighborhood.*

Write about your neighborhood. Include the people who help make your neighborhood special. Also, name some different ways you can be a good neighbor. Draw a picture of your neighborhood or one of your neighbors.

Examples: Is your neighborhood in the city? Is it in the country? What does your neighborhood look like? Is there someone in your neighborhood who always waves and says hello? Is there a neighbor who mows the lawn of an elderly neighbor? Is there something you do to be a good neighbor? What do you do?

Second Grade Prompts

Each prompt has a code. For example, the first eighth grade narrative prompt code is “N8A.” Please record the proper code on your essay. The top corner of each paper should include Student Name, Teacher (IST) Name, Date, Grade Level, and Prompt Code

Note: Please have second graders handwrite their prompts, and encourage them to write as much as they can themselves.

Most prompts have examples; however, please feel free to encourage your student to respond to the prompt in her or his own unique way.

Narrative

5 total

N2A: Write a story about a rainy day adventure.

Write a story about two children on a wet, rainy day. Use your imagination to write about their exciting and fun adventures during the day.

Examples: What are some fun things the children do when it rains? Do they play outside? What games will they play in the rain? What are some indoor games they will play?

N2B: Write a story about a very good or a very bad day.

Read Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No-Good, Very Bad Day, or any book that describes one day for one character. Write a story about a bad day or a good day that happened to you. If it was a bad day, write about the things that went wrong from the time you woke up to the time you went to bed. If it was a good day, write about all the good things that happened from the time you woke up to the time you went to bed.

Examples for a bad day: Did you get up late? Did you forget some homework? Did you want to spend time with a friend but he or she was sick? Did something make you feel angry or sad?

Examples for a good day: Did you win something? Did you get a surprise visit from someone you like? Did you do well on some school work? Did you do a favorite activity or go to a favorite place?

N2C: Write a story about a character who has to put up with something he or she doesn't like.

Create a character who has a really strong dislike. Write a story where your character has to experience the thing he or she doesn't like.

Examples: Does your character hate to eat hamburgers? What if he or she was invited over to a friend's house, and they were serving hamburgers? Does your character hate to swim? Write about a swim class that your character has to go to. Does your character hate flying on a plane? Write about a plane trip that your character has to go on. What does your character do or learn from this experience?

N2D: Write about a time you went to a new place.

Write about what you saw, what you did, and what you learned when you went to a place where you had never been before.

Examples: Did you go on a trip with a friend or relative? Did you visit someone in a different town or city or country? Did you go to a museum? What did you do there? Use your senses to describe the place. (What did the place look like? What did it smell like? What did it sound like? Did you eat something new? What did it taste like? Did you touch something new? What did it feel like?)

N2E: Write about the differences between your life and the childhood of a grown-up you know.

Choose a grown-up you know—maybe one of your parents, grandparents or guardians. Write about

how your daily life differs from his or hers when he or she was your age. Interview the person. (Ask him or her questions to find out how your life is different.) Choose three or four things about your daily life and three or four things about his or hers, and write about how they are different.

Examples of questions to ask: Where did you live when you were my age? Did you have chores when you were my age? Did you play video games when you were my age? Did you have any brothers and sisters when you were my age? (What other questions can you think of?)

Letter Writing

5 total

LW2A: *Write a letter to an animal.*

Think of an animal you would like to know more about. What would you most like to know about that animal? Imagine that the animal could talk and write back to answer any questions you have. Then, write a letter to that animal. Introduce yourself and let the animal know why you are writing, then ask any questions you have for the animal!

LW2B: *Write a letter to your favorite author about your favorite book.*

What is your favorite book, and why? Reread the book. After you've finished, write a letter to the author telling what you liked best about the book and why.

LW2C: *Write a letter to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., telling him about the world of today.*

Once you've learned about Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and his dream, write him a letter about the world we live in today. Do you think his dream has come true? What do you think we can do to help make his dream come true?

LW2D: *Write a letter to a friend or relative who is far away.*

Think of a friend or relative who lives far away. Perhaps it is a favorite aunt or uncle, or a friend who used to live next door but moved to another state. Write him or her a letter. What do you think your friend or relative would want to know about what has been happening in your life? What do you want to know about what is happening in his or her life?

LW2E: *Write a letter to a historical figure.*

Pick a historical figure and write a letter to him or her. First, find out information about the person in a book or on the Internet. Then, with that information in mind, write the letter. In your letter, tell the historical figure what you like about him or her. Ask questions, or tell him or her about your own life.

Example: George Washington Carver found more than 300 ways to use peanuts. To name a few, he made soap, ink, flour, and paint from peanuts. Read a book or look up information about Mr. Carver on the Internet to learn more about his work with peanuts. Write a letter to Mr. Carver about some of the products he made that you use today and how you use them. Include any questions you may have for Mr. Carver.

Third Grade Prompts

Each prompt has a code. For example, the first eighth grade narrative prompt code is “N8A.” Please record the proper code on your essay. The top corner of each paper should include Student Name, Teacher (IST) Name, Date, Grade Level, and Prompt Code.

Many of the prompts have examples; however, please feel free to encourage your student to respond to the prompt in her or his own unique way.

Narrative

3 total

N3A: Write about a problem you once had and how you solved it.

Choose a problem you had to deal with. Describe what you did to solve the problem. Write what solutions you tried, what challenges you had, and what finally worked. You may also want to write about what you learned from solving the problem.

Examples: Did you have an argument with a brother or sister? How did you resolve the argument? Did you have a problem learning to ride a bike? Did you have a problem learning to swim? How were you able to learn?

N3B: Write a story about best friends going on an adventure.

Make up a few friends and choose an adventure for them to go on together. Describe the different things that happen to them. The adventure can be fantasy or realistic, but remember to make it so the reader can understand it.

Examples: Do the friends take a trip somewhere? Do they see strange or unusual things? Use lots of details as you write the story, to make the story exciting for the reader.

N3C: Write a story about a child with a physical disability.

Write a story about a child your age with a physical disability. In your story, describe his or her friendship with another child your age.

Examples: How did the two children meet? What are the children like? What are some fun experiences they have together? What do they learn from each other?

Expository/Descriptive

3 total

E3A: Write a description of your community.

Choose at least three of the places in your community. Describe them using all five senses: sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch.

Examples: What does it smell like when you walk by the flower shop? What does it taste like when you eat at the bakery? What does it sound like when you listen to the birds in the park?

E3B: Write a description of a mystery food.

Choose a kind of food (such as an apple or a chocolate bar) and describe it without using its name in your description. Using the five senses, try to describe it in so much detail that your reader will be able to tell what it is without your naming it. Write its name upside down on the back side of the paper, so that the reader can see if she or he got it right.

E3C: *Write about an animal or plant that is beneficial to its environment.*

Choose an organism (a living thing such as a plant or animal) and write about how it is important or helpful to its environment. You can read about the organism to learn more about it, and you can also give your own reasons.

Examples: Worms added to the soil of a garden help to enrich the soil. Bats are beneficial because they eat flying bugs and mosquitoes. Mushrooms help to decompose dead trees and return their nutrients to the soil.

Letter Writing

4 total

LW3A: *Write a formal letter.*

Imagine that a toy company is looking for children to create a new toy. Create your own toy, and then write a letter to the toy company in which you describe and illustrate the toy. Be sure to start the letter by explaining why you are writing (because you have an idea for a toy for them), and then explain why they should consider making your new invention.

LW3B: *Write a persuasive personal letter.*

Imagine that you have just read a book or seen a movie, T.V. show, or play that you really liked. However, your best friend says that he or she doesn't want to read or see it. Write a letter encouraging your best friend to change his or her mind. For what reasons do you think your friend should see it? How will you convince your friend in your letter?

LW3C: *Write an invitation.*

Choose an occasion to celebrate and pretend that you are having a party (or plan a real party!). Create an invitation to send to all of your friends. Include all of the details your guests will need, such as time, place, and what to bring. Be sure to think of anything that your friends will want to know about the party and include it in the invitation.

LW3D: *Write a thank-you note.*

Write a thank-you note to a relative or family friend who has just sent you a special gift (real or imagined). In your thank-you note, be sure to show your appreciation and to explain what you enjoy about the gift. What else will you include in the letter? What would your relative or friend want to know?

Book Review

1 total

For ideas on books to read and what you might include in your book review, be sure to check out the "Reader's Guide to Book Reviews."

BR3A: *Write a book review.*

Imagine that a children's magazine has asked you to be their book reviewer. Your job is to write about a book you have read. Give a brief summary of what the book is about. Then, write about your thoughts on the book: Do you like the book? Why or why not? Do you think other people should read the book? Why or why not? For what ages would you recommend the book? Are there people with specific interests who would particularly like the book? What else do you want people to know about the book before they read it? Make sure you organize your review into paragraphs.

Fourth Grade Prompts

Each prompt has a code. For example, the first eighth grade narrative prompt code is “N8A.” Please record the proper code on your essay. The top corner of each paper should include Student Name, Teacher (IST) Name, Date, Grade Level, and Prompt Code.

One-Draft Writing

1 single-sitting essay

In fourth grade, California requires that you complete a writing test. This prompt is practice for your test. You will be asked to write in one of three modes (narrative, summary, or response to literature). You will respond to the prompt in one sitting. You will not see the actual prompt until you sit down to write the essay. Please arrange with your IST to do the one-draft practice prompt.

Narrative

2 total

N4A: *Write a story about a treasure hunt.*

Imagine that you sit down and begin to read a book from your local library. When you turn the page to start the second chapter, you find a treasure map. Write a story about finding the treasure map and what you do once you find it. Use your imagination to make up an adventurous story, describing the exciting events that happen in your treasure hunt.

N4B: *Write a story about a character correcting a big mistake.*

Write a story where the main character makes a big mistake that he or she has to fix. Make sure that you introduce the character and explain what his or her mistake is. Then, write a story about what the character has to do to fix the mistake. How is the mistake resolved? What does the character learn from making, and fixing, the mistake?

Expository/Compare & Contrast

2 total

C4A: *Write about the ways you’ve changed over the last two years.*

Think of what you knew and how you behaved two years ago. Compare and contrast what you were like two years ago with what you are like now. Choose at least two examples to show what you were like then and two examples to show how you have changed. Try to include internal changes as well as external changes. For example, growing taller might be an external change, while changing what you think or believe would be an internal change. What did you believe then, but not now? Do you behave differently now? What made you change?

C4B: *Compare and contrast yourself with a character from a book or a movie.*

Choose a character from a book or a movie, and write a paper comparing and contrasting yourself with that character. Be sure to name the character you choose (and the book or movie she or he is from). Write about how you are like the character, and about how you are different. Try to include at least two similarities and at least two differences in your paper. Be sure to go into detail and organize your paper in paragraphs.

Book Review

1 total

For ideas on books to read and what you might include in your book review, be sure to check out the “Reader’s Guide to Book Reviews.”

BR4A: *Write a book review.*

Imagine that a children’s magazine has asked you to be their book reviewer. Your job is to write about a book you have read. Give a brief summary of what the book is about. Then, write about your thoughts on the book: Do you like the book? Why or why not? Do you think other people should read the book? Why or why not? For what ages would you recommend the book? Are there people with specific interests who would particularly like the book? What else do you want people to know about the book before they read it? Make sure you organize your review into paragraphs.

Summary

3 total

Always include a copy of the original article with your summary. Your summary cannot be evaluated without one.

Z4A: *Summarize a newspaper article.*

Choose an interesting article from the newspaper and write a summary of its most important details. Be sure to state the article’s main idea and show how the article’s details connect to one another and support that main idea. You may also include why you think the article was written (the “context” of the article).

Z4B: *Summarize a magazine article.*

Choose an interesting article from a magazine and write a summary of its most important details. Be sure to state the article’s main idea and show how the article’s details connect to one another and support that main idea. You may also include why you think the article was written (the “context” of the article).

Z4C: *Summarize an internet article.*

Choose an interesting article from the internet and write a summary of its most important details. Be sure to state the article’s main idea and show how the article’s details connect to one another and support that main idea. You may also include why you think the article was written (the “context” of the article).

Information Report

2 total

R4A: *Write a report on two nations of California Native Americans.*

Research and write about two major nations of California American Indians. Include their historic and current geographic distribution, economic activities, legends, and religious beliefs. Describe how they have depended on, adapted to, or modified the physical environment to support their way of life. What were their lives like long ago? What are their lives like today? Include a bibliography with your paper. For information on bibliography format, see the “Bibliography, Works Cited and In-Text Citations” information.

R4B: *Write a report on the changes the Gold Rush caused to California.*

Choose three important ways the Gold Rush transformed California and describe each in detail. Some questions to consider: What changes were there to the way goods were produced and consumed? What changes occurred in towns? What conflicts between diverse groups of people did the Gold Rush create? Include a bibliography with your paper. For information on bibliography format, see the bibliography format link on Gorman’s webpage.

V4A: *Revise an essay you have already submitted for evaluation.*

Choose an essay that you have already submitted. Consider the evaluator's comments and feedback. Then, re-read your essay, thinking about what you could change and revise to make the essay stronger. Remember, revising an essay does not only mean "fixing" the mistakes. Think about other things you could do to make the essay better, as well. You should respond to the evaluator's comments, but also make choices based on changes you want to make.

After revising the essay, write a "reflection" of at least two paragraphs about what you changed, explaining why you revised as you did. Include your reflection (on a separate piece of paper) with the revision when submitting it. Also, when submitting your revision, be sure to include a copy of the original essay along with the evaluator's comment and suggestions and rubric, so that we can see what you changed. Revisions submitted without a copy of the original essay and evaluation will be returned unevaluated.

Examples: Perhaps the essay needs to be organized into paragraphs, perhaps it is missing an introduction, or perhaps it needs more descriptive details.

Fifth Grade Prompts

Each prompt has a code. For example, the first eighth grade narrative prompt code is “N8A.” Please record the proper code on your essay. The top corner of each paper should include Student Name, Teacher (IST) Name, Date, Grade Level, and Prompt Code

Narrative

2 total

N5A: Write a story about the most unforgettable day of your life.

Pick a day in your life that was special or important. Write a composition in which you describe that day, the events that took place, and how they affected you. Pay attention to the details of the events, the people involved, and the place or places visited. Explain why this day was so special.

N5B: Write a story about a space adventure.

Imagine that you are traveling in a spaceship with several robots. Write the story of your adventure. Describe what the robots can do, what you do, and where you go. Pay attention to the details of your traveling companions, your surroundings, and the events that take place during your journey. Finish the story with a surprise ending.

Expository/Descriptive

3 total

E5A: Write a paper describing one of your favorite places.

Choose one of your favorite places and write an expository paper describing that place. Use many sensory details, creating a “word picture” of the place. Try to make your reader feel like he or she is at that place. Describe the sights, the sounds, the smells, the textures, even the tastes of that place. Be creative in choosing your place: it may be a favorite campsite or beach, your backyard, a soccer field, a movie theatre...what place do you think of?

E5B: Describe an object and its importance.

Choose an object that is important to you or your family. If you’re not sure what object to choose, ask members of your family—maybe your parents or grandparents will have suggestions. Perhaps the object is a family heirloom. Perhaps it is an old photograph that has many memories or stories associated with it. Or, perhaps it is a newer object that has special meaning for you, such as a prized possession, trophy, or article of clothing. Once you have chosen your object, write a paper in which you describe the object and why it is important. Use sensory details to describe the object in detail, and reflect on its importance to you—what does the object mean to you?

E5C: Describe a super-power you wish you had.

Superman can fly and see through objects. Spiderman can climb anything. Other fictional super heroes have other special powers—for example, extraordinary strength, the ability to bend like rubber, and more! So now invent a new, original super-power, one that no other character has. As you describe the super-power, be creative and have fun. What would be your original super-power? What would it enable you to do? Why would you want it? What are its benefits? Are there any drawbacks to it? When would it most likely be useful? When not? Or, might it ever create a problem or be difficult to have? What else should readers know about the super-power? Because this is to be an expository essay, be sure to describe the power and its attributes in great detail.

Book Review

2 total

For ideas on books to read and what you might include in your book reviews, be sure to check out the “Reader’s Guide to Book Reviews.”

BR5A: *Write a book review comparing a book to its movie version.*

Choose a book that also has a movie version. Read the book and view the movie; then, write a book review in which you compare and contrast the two. Start with a *brief* summary. Then, go into your comparison: Do you think the movie or the book is better? Why? In your review, be sure to use specific scenes or details from both the book and the movie to show how they are different. After your introductory paragraph, use different body paragraphs for each specific area that you compare and contrast. Finish with a concluding paragraph in which you recommend both, one or the other, or neither the book nor the movie to your reader.

BR5B: *Write a book review on what you would have done differently if you were the author.*

In this book review, choose a book to critique and write about how you would change it. First, give a brief summary of the book. Then, pick two or three things that you would change in the book if you were the author. For example, you might change the events, make the characters different, or change the vocabulary the author uses. For each thing that you would change, be sure to explain why you would change it, and why your change would be better than the way the author wrote it. Be sure to use a detailed paragraph for each change, and to end with a conclusion in which you explain why your changes would make the book better as a whole.

Persuasive

3 total

P5A: *Write a persuasive letter to your parent or guardian.*

Think of something that you would like to do but that your parents wouldn’t normally allow you to do. Then, write a persuasive letter to your parent or guardian persuading him or her to let you do this activity. Try to anticipate the reasons your parent or guardian wouldn’t want you to do the activity, and address those reasons in your letter by offering solutions, incentives, or compromises.

P5B: *Write a persuasive letter to a friend.*

Choose an activity that you enjoy doing, and imagine that a friend of yours has refused to try it. Write a detailed letter to your friend in which you attempt to persuade him or her to try the activity. Be sure to explain what the activity is like, and what your friend can expect when trying the activity. Also, be sure to address the reasons you think your friend has refused to try it.

P5C: *Write a persuasive letter on a local issue.*

Find a local issue in your neighborhood, city, or region that matters to you. (To get an idea, you might look in your local newspaper.) Learn about the issue by reading whatever you can find about it and talking to family, friends, or neighbors to see what they think about the issue. Then, decide what you believe should be done about the issue, and write a letter in which you state your position and support it with evidence. Be sure to clearly state your position, and to consider the various sides of the issue. Address your letter to someone in the local community (for example, to the local newspaper, the city council, or the mayor). As well as submitting this letter to a writing evaluator, we encourage you to send it!

Research Report

2 total

R5A: *Write a report on a historical figure.*

Choose a historical figure whom you admire or find interesting from your study of American history. Write a report about the person you chose. Give a brief biography of the person, and then describe his or her achievements with specific details. Demonstrate and explain how those achievements affected history.

Include a bibliography with your paper.

R5B: *Write a report on the causes of the American Revolution.*

Choose a minimum of three causes of the American Revolution. Then, write a report in which you explain in detail how those particular causes led to the Revolution. Explain the importance of the different causes and show their direct effects. Do you believe there would have been a revolution if one of those causes did not occur? Explain why or why not. Include your own ideas, rather than only summarizing what you have read.

Include a bibliography with your paper.

(Note: We recommend combining R5B with a Social Studies unit on the American Revolution.)

Revision

1 total

V5A: *Revise an essay you have already submitted for evaluation to make it as strong as possible.*

Choose an essay that you have already submitted. Consider the evaluator's comments and feedback. Then, re-read your essay, thinking about what you could change and revise to make the essay stronger. Remember, revising an essay does not only mean "fixing" the mistakes. Think about other things you could do to make the essay better, as well. For example, perhaps the essay needs to be organized into paragraphs, perhaps it is missing an introduction, or perhaps it needs more descriptive details. Each essay will be different. You should respond to the evaluator's comments, but also make choices based on changes *you* want to make.

After revising the essay, write a "reflection" of at least two paragraphs about what you changed, explaining why you revised as you did. Include your reflection (on a separate piece of paper) with the revision when submitting it to the evaluator. Also, when submitting your revision, be sure to include a copy of the original essay along with the evaluator's comments, suggestions and rubric, so that we can see what you changed.

Sixth Grade Prompts

Each prompt has a code. For example, the first eighth grade narrative prompt code is "N8A." Please record the proper code on your essay. The top corner of each paper should include Student Name, Teacher (IST) Name, Date, Grade Level, and Prompt Code

We recommend that submissions be typed, double-spaced, in 12-point Times New Roman font.

Self-assessment

1 total

The self-assessment prompt should be done at the beginning of the school year.

S6A: *Write a reflection on your writing strengths and weaknesses.*

Consider the work that you completed last year. Keeping your evaluators' comments in mind, write a reflection on your writing. Describe your strengths as a writer and explain how those strengths help you to write effectively. Also, describe your weaknesses as a writer, and explain what you think you can do to improve them. (Remember, writing is more than just spelling and grammar; try to think about the global aspects of writing, such as the use of specific details to help develop your ideas, paragraphing and organization, awareness of your audience, or construction of strong introductions and conclusions.) How do you hope to grow as a writer? What do you hope to accomplish in your writing this year? What steps will you take to become a better writer?

Narrative

3 total

N6A: *Write a suspense story.*

Write a narrative piece from the first-person point of view about a few characters in a remote and possibly scary setting. Develop your plot to show why the characters are in this place, what happens while they are there, and how they are able to leave. Create details in the setting and dialogue among the characters to create a feeling of suspense.

N6B: *Write a story about a friend in a time of need.*

Write a story from the third-person point of view about a group of friends, one of whom needs help after an accident. Use sensory details and concrete language to develop the plot and the characters. Establish a specific setting, integrate dialogue, and add suspenseful elements.

N6C: *Write a story based on a painting or photograph.*

Find a painting or photograph that sparks your imagination. Then, using the painting or photograph as inspiration, write the story "behind" the photograph. Use your imagination and lots of details to develop a plot, setting, and characters. (When submitting the story, include a photocopy of the painting or photograph, as well.)

Expository/Compare & Contrast

3 total

E6A: *Write a composition on your style choices.*

Write a composition in which you explore your choices of clothing, hairstyle, or jewelry and how those choices represent your attitude and taste. Compare and contrast your choices with those of your friends and family. Also, you may compare and contrast your present style with your style

when you were younger. Conclude your composition with a paragraph in which you reflect on your style and style in general. How important do you think style is?

E6B: *Write a composition on a talent or gift that you have.*

Write a composition in which you introduce and explain a special talent or gift. Describe your gift or talent. Tell how you developed it. Explain how the gift or talent enhances the quality of your life and the lives of those with whom you share it.

E6C: *Write a composition on two activities that you enjoy.*

Choose two different activities that you enjoy. Write a composition in which you describe the two activities. Explain in detail what these two activities are all about and why you enjoy them. Compare and contrast the two activities: What similarities and differences exist between them?

Response to Literature

2 total

L6A: *Write a composition on a novel with a historical setting.*

Pick a book that is set in a different time and place, and write a paper in which you compare that book's historical setting with the present day. Give a *brief* summary of the book, but make sure that your essay is mostly about your ideas and interpretation of the historical setting. Some questions to consider: What did you learn from the book? Do you think the author did a good job of portraying the historical setting? Why or why not? Do you think that the issues the characters in the story face are similar to any issues that modern-day people face? Be sure to use specific examples from the book to support your interpretation of the historical setting.

L6B: *Write a composition about the theme of a book.*

Choose a book that you think has an important message, lesson, or underlying meaning (this can be considered the *theme* of the book). Then, write a paper in which you clearly state what you think the theme is, and explore how that theme is presented in the book. Give a *brief* summary of the book, but make sure that your essay is mostly about your interpretation of the book's theme. What does the book mean to you? What did it teach you? What techniques does the author use to get the theme across? Be sure to use specific examples, such as quotes, scenes, and characters, from the book to support your interpretation of the theme.

Persuasive

2 total

P6A: *Write a persuasive letter to the Governor of California.*

Find an issue in your state that matters to you. (To get an idea, you might look in the newspaper.) Learn about the issue by reading whatever you can find about it and talking to family, friends, or neighbors to see what they think about the issue. Then, decide what you believe should be done about the issue, and write a letter to the Governor in which you state your position and support it with evidence. Be sure to clearly state your position, and to consider and address the various sides of the issue. (Discuss the opposing viewpoint as well as your own). As well as submitting this letter to a writing evaluator, we encourage you to send it to the Governor!

P6B: *Write a composition about a place outside of the U.S. that you would like to visit.*

Choose a destination outside of the U.S. where you'd like to visit. Write a composition in which you

convince your parents or guardians that your destination is the right choice. Discuss your reasons for wanting to go there, explain the benefits, and describe the activities involved. Make an argument that your choice would be safe, worthwhile, and good for you. Support your arguments with relevant details and be sure to address the concerns and opposing arguments of your parents or guardians.

(Note: P6B and R6A complement each other; we recommend doing R6A first, and then P6B.)

Research

2 total

R6A: *Write a research paper on a place outside of the U.S.*

Choose a place outside of the U.S. that interests you and research the historical, political, cultural, and social structures of that place. The place you choose may be a country or a specific place within a country, such as a city or state. Find information from multiple sources (such as books, websites, and periodicals). Then, write a paper about that place, including the important facts and details that you discovered in your research. Be sure to put the information into your own words and include a bibliography.

R6B: *Write a research paper exploring a specific issue in the world.*

Choose an issue of worldwide interest that involves the need for different countries to make changes, such as climate change or immigration. Narrow your focus to a manageable size and do your research on a specific area. (For example, instead of global warming in general, narrow your research to the Kyoto Protocol. Or, instead of immigration in general, narrow your research to immigration along the California and Mexico border.) Research the topic, gathering facts and information from multiple and reliable sources (such as websites, public speeches, periodicals, and reference books). In your research paper, explain the background of the topic, identify the different sides of the issue, and identify specific changes that could be made to have a positive effect on the issue. As you write about the issue, use the facts, examples, and explanations from your research. Be sure to put the information into your own words and include a bibliography.

Revision

1 total

V6A: *Revise an essay you have already submitted for evaluation to make it as strong as possible.*

Choose an essay that you have already submitted. Consider the evaluator's comments and feedback. Then, re-read your essay, thinking about what you could change and revise to make the essay stronger. Remember, revising an essay does not only mean "fixing" the mistakes. Think about other things you could do to make the essay better, as well. For example, perhaps the essay needs to be organized into paragraphs, perhaps it is missing an introduction, or perhaps it needs more descriptive details. Each essay will be different. You should respond to the evaluator's comments, but also make choices based on changes *you* want to make.

After revising the essay, write a "reflection" of at least two paragraphs about what you changed, explaining why you revised as you did. Include your reflection (on a separate piece of paper) with the revision. Also, when submitting your revision to the writing evaluator, be sure to include a copy of the original essay along with the evaluator's comments, suggestions and rubric, so that we can see what you changed.

Seventh Grade Prompts

Each prompt has a code. For example, the first eighth grade narrative prompt code is “N8A.” Please record the proper code on your essay to identify the chosen prompt. The top corner of each paper should include Student Name, Teacher (IST) Name, Date, Grade Level, and Prompt Code.

We recommend that submissions be typed, double-spaced, in 12-point Times New Roman font.

One-Draft Writing

1 single-sitting essay

The One-Draft Writing should be submitted before the state test occurs.

In seventh grade, California requires that you complete a writing test in the spring. Therefore, this prompt is practice for your test. You will be asked to write in one of four modes (narrative, summary, response to literature, or persuasive). You will respond to the prompt in one sitting. You will not see the actual prompt until you sit down to write the essay. Please arrange with your teacher to do the one-draft practice prompt. (The one-draft writing should be handwritten, due to the nature of the prompt.)

Self-assessment

1 total

The self-assessment prompt should be done at the beginning of the school year.

S7A: *Write a reflection on your writing strengths and weaknesses.*

Consider the work that you completed last year. Keeping your evaluators’ comments in mind, write a reflection on your writing. Describe your strengths as a writer and explain how those strengths help you to write effectively. Also, describe your weaknesses as a writer, and explain what you think you can do to improve them. (Remember, writing is more than just spelling and grammar; try to think about the global aspects of writing, such as the use of specific details to help develop your ideas, paragraphing and organization, awareness of your audience, or construction of strong introductions and conclusions.) How do you hope to grow as a writer? What do you hope to accomplish in your writing this year? What steps will you take to become a better writer?

Narrative

2 total

N7A: *Write a story about being in a different family from your own.*

Write a narrative composition from the first-person point of view, in which you wake up one morning to find yourself in a completely different family, and they treat you as if you were one of them. Create a good plot line, using well-developed characters; dialogue; specific time and place; and strategies such as gestures, tone of voice, actions, facial expressions, and details to make your story strong.

N7B: *Write a story about friends facing a conflict.*

Imagine friends who are facing a conflict. Write a story about this conflict from the first-person point of view, following the standard plot line of beginning, exposition, conflict, rising action, climax, and denouement. Develop major and minor characters and use sensory details to create a vivid setting. Use the strategies of dialogue; suspense; and descriptions of movement, gestures, and facial expressions to convey narrative action.

Expository**3 total**

E7A: *Write a composition in which you describe different moods in the same setting.*

Describe your room at the brightest time of day and, in contrast, at the moment after dusk when it is full of shadows. Include details and vivid language to evoke the mood you feel in the room at each time. Describe the look of the room, but avoid simply listing the objects in your room. Concentrate on mood, feeling, and poetic language (such as similes, metaphors, and other figures of speech) to convey how the room looks.

E7B: *Write a letter in which you describe a California beach.*

Write a letter to a person who has never been to a California beach, in which you describe a California beach to him or her. Be very detailed and specific, painting a picture in words to show what a California beach is like. Try to appeal to all of the senses to convey the essence of the beach; for example, you may describe the feel and texture of the sand and water, the effect of the waves and the wind, and the activities one does at the beach.

E7C: *Write an expository email.*

Find a website on the Internet that interests you. Then, write an email to someone at that website, in which you introduce yourself and explain why you are writing. (To decide whom to contact within a website, there is usually a “Contact” button; you may write to a specific person within the organization, or you may write to the webmaster.) Decide what you want to write in your email. Perhaps you want to find more information about something on the website, or perhaps you have a comment about something you read on the site. In your email, be sure to clearly explain why you are writing (your purpose). As well as submitting this prompt to a writing evaluator, we encourage you to send the email!

Summary**1 total**

When submitting your summary, please be sure to include a copy of the original article. Summary prompts submitted without a copy of the original article will not be evaluated.

Z7A: *Write a summary of an informative article.*

Choose an article from a newspaper, periodical, or an online source. Then, write a summary of the article. Use your own words to convey the main idea of the article. Identify and include in your summary the most important details that support the article’s main idea. You may wish to comment on the context of the article, as well: how does the article relate to a larger discussion of the topic at hand?

Response to Literature**2 total**

L7A: *Write about the differences between one likable antagonist and one unredeemable villain.*

From a story or novel you have read, choose an antagonist or “bad guy” who has complex characteristics which make him or her likable. Write an analysis of the likable character in contrast with a villain who has no redeeming characteristics. Explain the differences between them. Examine which character is more realistic and more fully developed. Analyze the devices (such as description, dialogue, and actions) that the author uses to portray the characters. Remember to give a *brief* summary of the story, but to focus your paper on your analysis of the two characters.

L7B: *Write an analysis of the changes that a character goes through in a novel.*

It is often said that the main character, or protagonist, of a novel must go through a journey (physical or mental) through the course of a book. Choose a character in a novel who goes through such a journey, and write a paper in which you analyze the changes the character goes through in the course of the book. Some questions to consider: How is the character different at the end of the book? What events in the book made the character change as she or he did? What can you learn from the changes that the character went through? What techniques did the author use to show those changes in the character? Be sure to use specific details and textual examples to show how the character changed. Remember to give a *brief* summary of the story, but to focus your paper on your analysis of the character's changes.

Persuasive

2 total

P7A: *Write a letter to your best friend persuading him or her not to go against his or her parents' or guardians' wishes.*

Imagine that your best friend has decided to do something that his or her parents have forbidden, and that now your friend wants you to help him or her avoid getting caught. Write your friend a letter explaining why you won't participate, and attempt to persuade your friend from continuing to disobey his or her parents. Provide reasoned, logical points to your arguments, as well as emotional appeals. Address your friend's reasons for doing what he or she is planning to do, and develop your letter with good explanations.

P7B: *Write a persuasive letter to the President of the U.S.*

Find an issue of national importance that matters to you. (To get an idea, you might look in the newspaper.) Learn about the issue by reading whatever you can find about it and talking to family, friends, or neighbors to see what they think about the issue. Then, decide what you believe should be done about the issue, and write a letter to the President in which you state your position and support it with evidence. Be sure to clearly state your position, and to consider the various sides of the issue. As well as submitting this letter to a writing evaluator, we encourage you to send it to the President!

Research

2 total

Note: R7A is a prompt intended to help students organize research for R7B. Although here it is specific to R7B, the prompt of writing an annotated bibliography could also be used for any research topic.

R7A: *Write an annotated bibliography.*

Choose a specific time and place in history and research the cultural, social, political, or economic structures that existed and their effects on the people of that time and place. Find five or more sources of information on that time and place. Then, use those sources to write an annotated bibliography. In your annotated bibliography, list each source in correct bibliography format (see the bibliography format link on Gorman's webpage). Then, under each source (or entry) of your bibliography, write a paragraph in which you summarize the source in one to two sentences, describe what you thought about that source, and explain how you think it will be useful to you when you write your research paper. Include at least five sources in your annotated bibliography (at least one book, one periodical, and one online source).

R7B: Use your annotated bibliography (see R7A) to write a research paper on the social, political, cultural or economic structures of a certain time and place.

Re-read your annotated bibliography (R7A) and narrow down your research topic to a very specific question or statement. Write a research paper in which you fully answer the question or statement and present a complete understanding of the topic you have chosen. Include citations and a bibliography.

Example: If you are interested in the values, social customs, and traditions of medieval Japan, you might write your research paper on how the warrior code of 12th-century Samurai influenced Japanese society then and today. Your question might be whether the physical and mental discipline of medieval Samurai is still practiced by people in the modern world.

Revision

1 total

V7A: Revise an essay you have already submitted for evaluation to make it as strong as possible.

Choose an essay that you have already submitted. Consider the evaluator's comments and feedback. Then, re-read your essay, thinking about what you could change and revise to make the essay stronger. Remember, revising an essay does not only mean "fixing" the mistakes. Think about other things you could do to make the essay better, as well. For example, perhaps the essay needs to be organized into paragraphs, perhaps it is missing an introduction, or perhaps it needs more descriptive details. Each essay will be different. You should respond to the evaluator's comments, but also make choices based on changes *you* want to make.

After revising the essay, write a "reflection" of at least two paragraphs about what you changed, explaining why you revised as you did. Include your reflection (on a separate piece of paper) with the revision. Also, when submitting your revision to the writing evaluator, be sure to include a copy of the original essay along with the evaluator's comments, suggestions and rubric, so that we can see what you changed.

Eighth Grade Prompts

Each prompt has a code. For example, the first eighth grade narrative prompt code is “N8A.” Please record the proper code on your essay to identify the chosen prompt. The top corner of each paper should include Student Name, Teacher (IST) Name, Date, Grade Level, and Prompt Code.

We recommend that submissions be typed, double-spaced, in 12-point Times New Roman font.

Self-assessment

1 total

The self-assessment prompt should be done at the beginning of the school year.

S8A: *Write a reflection on your writing process and your writing strengths and weaknesses.*

Consider the work that you completed last year. Keeping your evaluators’ comments in mind, write a reflection on your writing. Describe your writing process—the steps you go through from start to finish—to transform ideas into a polished final draft. Then, describe your strengths as a writer and explain how those strengths help you to write effectively. Also describe your weaknesses as a writer, and explain what you think you can do to improve them. (Remember, writing is more than just spelling and grammar; try to think about the global aspects of writing, such as the use of specific details to help develop your ideas, paragraphing and organization, awareness of your audience, or construction of strong introductions and conclusions.) How do you hope to grow as a writer? What do you hope to accomplish in your writing this year? What steps will you take to become a better writer?

Narrative

2 total

N8A: *Write a story from the point of view of a character of the opposite gender from yourself.*

Create a character who is of the opposite gender from yourself. Imagine that his or her best friend has stopped talking to him or her. Write a story using the character’s first-person point of view and describe what happens. Include good details and a range of narrative strategies, such as dialogue, action, physical description, background description, and character development.

N8B: *Write a suspense story.*

Write a story in the third-person point of view in which a mysterious person moves into a nice, quiet neighborhood. Create suspense and intrigue as you develop the story and the characters that populate the neighborhood. As you write the story, choose your details carefully and employ a wide range of narrative and descriptive strategies, such as relevant dialogue, specific actions, physical description, background description, and comparison or contrast of characters.

Expository

4 total

E8A: *Write a description of an environment without using one of the five senses.*

Choose either the sense of sight or hearing and spend one hour imagining yourself without that sense. (If you choose sight, try wearing a blindfold for that hour; if you choose hearing, try wearing earplugs.) At the end of this experiment, write a composition in which you describe your environment using all senses but the one you chose. Write about exploring and examining your surroundings and the people you encountered during your experiment. Include reflections on what

you learned during the hour in addition to descriptions of how your world was changed.

E8B: *Write about your favorite kind of art and a particular work of art.*

Choose your favorite art period or style (such as Italian Renaissance, Cubism, Art Deco, or Pop Art), and choose a work of art which represents that period or style. Write a composition in which you describe in detail the piece you have chosen. Explain why you chose this piece and why it represents the period or style. You may compare and contrast the period or style you have chosen with another period or style. Also, be sure to share your personal insights into the overall effect of the piece, as well as the effects of particular elements of the piece (such as its use of color, its size, or its texture). If you do research to find information about the piece or the period, be sure to include citations and a bibliography. For information on documentation format, see the Documentation Format link on Gorman’s webpage.

E8C: *Write an essay in which you respond to a quote from a philosopher.*

Choose a philosopher from any period of history (such as Aristotle, Locke, or Spinoza), and find a quotation from that philosopher that interests you. Try to find a quotation that makes you think in a different way—one that makes you “see the world with new eyes.” Then, respond to that quotation in an essay. Some things to consider: what do you think the quotation means? Can you think of any real-life examples that illustrate that quotation? Do you agree with the quotation? Do you disagree with it? Go into detail and explore the thought behind the quotation. (Be sure to indicate what quotation you are responding to in your essay, and give the quotation in full!)

Research Paper Option: For an extra challenge, write a research paper comparing two philosophers. A few examples of philosophers who would be good to compare are Aristotle & Plato, Confucius & Lao Tzu, or Locke & Hobbes. You will need to research both philosophers’ viewpoints and read work that they have written so that you can compare them.

E8D: *Write a process paper.*

Write a paper that describes in detail how to do something. For example, you might write about how to make your favorite recipe, how to prepare for a backpacking trip, how to build a web page, or how to change the oil in a car. (Choose something that you know how to do very well!) Be sure to go into detail and describe, in order, every step involved in completing the process you choose. Your reader should be able to clearly follow your directions and complete the process you describe after reading your paper.

Response to Literature

2 total

L8A: *Write an analysis of the use of imagery or symbolism in a piece of literature.*

Choose a piece of literature (a novel, story, poem, or play) in which the author’s use of imagery or symbolism is crucial to the way you experience the work. Then, write an essay in which you analyze how the imagery and/or symbolism affect you as a reader. For example, perhaps there is an important object or image that recurs in the work of literature—how does its recurring relate to the meaning? Or, perhaps the language the author uses to describe one object or image is much different than the language he or she uses to describe another object or image—what effect does this change in language have on the way you experience these descriptions as a reader? Remember to give a *brief* summary of the work of literature, but focus your essay on your analysis of the imagery or symbolism in the piece of literature.

L8B: Write a response to literature in which you compare and contrast the use of an author’s technique in two different pieces of literature.

Choose two works of literature, and pick an author’s technique that is important to both works. (Remember, for ideas about author’s techniques, see the new “Reader’s Guide to Author’s Techniques” on the Gorman website.) Then, write an essay in which you compare and contrast the ways the two different authors use the technique you chose. For example, you may write about how foreshadowing is used in two different suspense stories. Use specific textual examples from both works to illustrate how the technique is used in each of the pieces. Which author do you think does a better job using the chosen technique? Why? Remember to give *brief* summaries of the two works of literature, but focus your essay on your analysis of the authors’ use of the technique.

Persuasive

2 total

P8A: Write a persuasive essay from the opposite point of view.

Have you heard the phrase “standing in another person’s shoes?” That is what you are going to do in this paper. Choose an issue that you have an opinion on or feel strongly about. Then, research that issue and consider the argument from the other side: that is, the side you do *not* agree with. Next, write a persuasive essay from that side of the issue. What evidence, examples, and reasoning support the opposite point of view? Be sure to distinguish between facts and opinions, and use facts to support the point of view from which you are writing. (A large part of writing persuasively is considering the various sides of an issue. This prompt will help you to gain the experience of doing so.)

P8B: Write a Letter to the Editor or an opinion article on home school education.

Write a letter to the editor or a news article in which you either defend or oppose home school education. Clearly state your position in a thesis statement. Explain either the advantages or disadvantages of home school education. Provide detailed evidence and examples to support your arguments, differentiating between fact and opinion. Answer reader’s concerns and opposing arguments with good, logical reasons, as well as emotional appeals. You may use specific examples from your own experience, but remember to make distinctions between facts and opinions.

Research

2 total

We encourage you to begin your research essay by writing an annotated bibliography (see prompt R7A) to help you to formulate and organize your research.

R8A: Write a research essay in which you analyze a specific aspect of American democracy.

Choose a particular concept or principle of American democracy. Write a research essay in which you analyze how that concept or principle created or contributed to the development of political institutions and ideas in later years. (For example, you might write about the importance of the “checks and balances” system between the three branches of the U.S. government.) Be sure to include citations and a bibliography.

R8B: Write a research essay on an environmental issue.

Choose an environmental issue to research and write an essay in which you explain the issue. Be sure to clearly state the issue that you are writing about in a thesis statement, and explore the details of the issue in your essay. (For example, you may write about alternative energy sources such as

solar or wind power, gas consumption and hybrid technology in cars, organic versus conventional farming, global warming and its causes and possible effects, or a particular species of animal that is threatened by habitat destruction.) Consider concluding your research essay with a “call to action,” in which you offer some ideas of what can be done about the issue.

Be sure to include citations and a bibliography.

Revision**1 total**

V8A: *Revise an essay you have already submitted for evaluation to make it as strong as possible.*

Choose an essay that you have already submitted. Consider the evaluator’s comments and feedback. Then, re-read your essay, thinking about what you could change and revise to make the essay stronger. Remember, revising an essay does not only mean “fixing” the mistakes. Think about other things you could do to make the essay better, as well. For example, perhaps the essay needs to be organized into paragraphs, perhaps it is missing an introduction, or perhaps it needs more descriptive details. Each essay will be different. You should respond to the evaluator’s comments, but also make choices based on changes *you* want to make.

After revising the essay, write a “reflection” of at least two paragraphs about what you changed, explaining why you revised as you did. Include your reflection (on a separate piece of paper) with the revision. Also, when submitting your revision to the writing evaluator, be sure to include a copy of the original essay along with the evaluator’s comments, suggestions and rubric, so that we can see what you changed.

Ninth Grade Prompts

Each prompt has a code. For example, the first eighth grade narrative prompt code is “N8A.” Please record the proper code on your essay to identify the chosen prompt. The top corner of each paper should include Student Name, Teacher (IST) Name, Date, Grade Level, and Prompt Code. All submissions should be typed, double-spaced, in 12-point Times New Roman font.

Self-assessment

1 total

S9A: *Write a reflection on your writing.*

Consider the work that you completed last year. Keeping your evaluators’ comments in mind, write a reflection of at least 500 words on your writing. Describe your writing process—the steps you go through from start to finish—to transform ideas into a polished final draft. Describe your strengths as a writer and explain how those strengths enable you to write effectively. Also describe your weaknesses as a writer, why these weaknesses exist, and what you can do to improve on them (avoid discussion of mechanical errors such as spelling and punctuation, focusing instead on global aspects of the essay such as creating an effective thesis or developing ideas). Describe your revision process, the methods you use when revising; either include an example of a situation in which revision contributed to making a more effective final draft, or speculate on how your revision process might improve. Lastly, describe what you do to avoid past problems or frustrations you have had with writing; address problems or frustrations such as getting started, procrastination, fulfilling an essay assignment, following through with a thesis, developing ideas, concluding, researching and avoiding plagiarism, or some other facet of writing that concerns you.

Expository

5 total

E9A: *Write an instructive composition, focusing on clarity of explanation.*

Choose an activity that you enjoy or about which you have knowledge. Write an essay of at least 750 words in which you teach your reader, step by step, how to perform or engage in the activity you have chosen. Emphasize why it is important to perform the activity just as you describe it, explaining what the consequences may be if one doesn’t follow your directions exactly. Describe not only how to do the activity but also what is enjoyable or interesting about it. Choose language that expresses your unique voice and conveys your emotions or attitudes about the activity.

E9B: *Write an instructive composition, focusing on explaining to a particular audience.*

Write a composition that explains how to do a task to someone unfamiliar with that task. Pick an activity that you know how to do but someone you know doesn’t. In at least 750 words, write a letter to that person in which you describe in detail how to do the activity, choosing the type of language and level of expression appropriate to that person, whether he or she be 9 or 99 years old. Make the explanation clear, defining terms when necessary, and explain why it is important to follow the steps just as you describe them. (Note that where prompt E9A, above, requires you to focus on developing the expressivity of your voice and language use, this prompt requires you to focus on using and shaping voice and language to meet the needs of a specific audience.) Be sure to use proper letter format.

E9C: *Write a composition about your favorite school subject.*

In an essay of at least 750 words, explain what your favorite school subject is and why. Provide

enough detail to make the subject familiar to those who may not have your appreciation for it. Explain why this subject has value to you. Also, explain what you gain from studying this subject and what you hope to do with this knowledge in the future, whether it be study it further at a college or university, pursue a career in the field, apply the knowledge to a hobby, or use it to make a contribution to your community. Be sure to explain what the subject is, why you find it valuable, and what you will do with this knowledge in the future.

E9D: *Write an essay about the kind of work you would like to do.*

Decide what kind of work you would like to do—whether part-time, full-time, or as a long-term career—and what kind of work, if any, you would definitely not want to do. Write an essay of at least 750 words in which you explain why you have chosen this work, what skills and experiences you hope to gain from a future job, how you imagine these will help you in the future, and what difficulties you foresee in balancing your time between work and other demands such as education, friends, and family.

E9E: *Write a composition that summarizes a work of literature.*

Choose one book, and then in an essay of at least 750 words summarize its plot, also describing setting, point of view, significant characters, major symbols, tone, the book’s theme, or any other important aspects of the book that should be included in a complete summary. (Recall that a summary merely relates *what* happens in a book, whereas analysis is to account for *why* and *how* what happens happens. This prompt requires you to complete a summary only.)

Narrative**4 total**

N9A: *Write a composition that reflects on being a child.*

In at least 750 words, write an essay in which you pick an age from your childhood and describe what it was like for you being that age. Describe the setting as you remember it, and reflect on your abilities then. Describe the activities you engaged in as well as what you were able and unable to do. What did you desire to do then but could not? Additionally, reflect on and describe the advantages and disadvantages of being that age and being your age now.

N9B: *Write a composition that reflects on a day in a classroom or other educational environment.*

In an essay of at least 750 words, describe the setting and describe what occurred in a typical day in that setting. Then reflect on what you learned in that setting other than “subjects” like mathematics, language arts, sciences, etc. Reflect on what lessons about life were taught explicitly or implicitly, and what behaviors and attitudes were and were not tolerated or promoted. Discuss what you learned, among other factors, about socializing, time, work, and/or public, shared space.

N9C: *Write a narrative reflection about a particular friend.*

Choose a person who is not a member of your immediate family with whom you share a unique relationship. Write a narrative piece of at least 750 words in which you describe the person in great detail so that readers are able to visualize him or her as well as understand some important aspects of his or her personality. Explain the origins of the relationship you have with the person and the special bond the two of you have developed. Provide specific examples that reveal the significance of the friendship. Reflect on the significance of the friendship to your personal development, leading to the present.

N9D: Write a reflective narrative about a turning point in your life.

Choose an event or moment in your life that was significant to you. Write a narrative piece of at least 750 words in which you explain what occurred and why it was significant. As you write about this experience, choose language, details, and tone that will recreate what your feelings were at the time and make it clear to the reader what the turning point was like and has meant for you. Reflect on what that turning point means to you now, what you have learned from it, how it has influenced your life, and how it has influenced any of your decisions since then.

Response to Literature

2 total

[For any essay requiring that you read a long book, make sure you start reading the book about two months before the essay's due date. Also, remember that when you quote from a book you need to cite the page number for a quotation in text and document the book on a Works Cited page.]

L9A: Write an analysis of the similarities and differences between two pieces of literature.

Choose two pieces that you have read this year while learning about literature. Write an essay of at least 1000 words in which you analyze how the themes in these two selections are similar or different, comparing and contrasting them. Explain what the themes are early in the essay, and quote from the texts to explain how they are expressed. Explain the significance of the connections you make between the two pieces.

L9B: Write a composition on one of the following themes: friendship, love, betrayal, or redemption.

Choose two works of literature that contain and articulate one of the above themes. Write a composition of at least 1000 words comparing the different authors' treatments of the theme. Analyze how at least one of the following conveys messages about the theme: characters, use of settings, use of literary devices, or diction, tone, and mood. Explain the significance of the theme in relation to at least one of the items above. Reflect on the works' significance to a modern teenage audience.

Examples: One of the major works read by most 9th graders is Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. A novel from the suggested reading list, *Of Mice and Men*, evokes these themes as well, but in a very different time and with very different characters.

L9C: Write a composition comparing two treatments of the relationship between governing powers and governed people.

Choose two from the following list of novels: *Animal Farm*, *Fahrenheit 451*, *Lord of the Flies*, *Catcher in the Rye*, or *Ishi, the Last of his Tribe*. Write a composition of at least 1000 words in which you compare the different authors' messages about the power of the governing body, those whom it governs, and the conflict between conformity and rebellion against a governing or ruling body. As you analyze the authors' messages about this theme, analyze also how the authors convey these messages. Explain the significance of at least one literary device in relation to the theme.

L9D: Analyze the theme of work or labor in a novel.

Choose a novel which is concerned with work or labor, such as *Of Mice and Men* or *Animal Farm*. Then choose one of the following literary devices: character, setting, word choice, or symbolism. Write an essay of at least 1000 words in which you identify the author's message about working people in the novel and analyze how the literary device you have chosen helps express that message. Explain how the device is significant to the message.

L9E: Write a composition that explores the function of setting.

Choose two works of literature, and then examine the setting of each. In an essay of at least 1000 words, describe the physical settings, the locations, the time periods, and the social contexts. Examine the settings in detail, explaining the significance of the particular settings to the themes or overall messages of the books. Discuss the ways the particular settings contribute to the themes.

Persuasive**3 total**

P9A: Write a persuasive composition to your parents.

Choose a decision your parents have made for you that you would like to see them change. Write a persuasive argument of at least 750 words to convince your parents to allow you to make a choice different than theirs. Choose your language with your audience in mind, develop logical connections, and express your views. Use a tone and language that respects your parents while anticipating their objections to your position. Format the essay as a letter.

Examples: You may wish to stop or start eating meat or see with friends a movie that your parents have decided against.

P9B: Write a letter to persuade a person to change a certain behavior.

Choose something that one of your friends or family members does that bothers or troubles you. Write that person a letter of at least 750 words explaining why the behavior or choice bothers you. Express your perspective fully, and choose argumentative strategies with the target audience in mind. Use a tone and language that respects the person while anticipating his or her objections to your position. Use correct letter format.

P9C: Write a composition to persuade a person to read a certain piece of literature.

Choose a short story, poem, play, or essay that you have read this year while learning about literature. Write a persuasive letter of at least 750 words to a friend in which you present a convincing argument to that friend about why she or he should read the piece (be sure to identify the author and title of the piece early on in your essay). Choose reasoning that will be most effective and that will appeal to the friend's values, biases, and/or needs. Refer to specific parts of the piece—you should use quotations—to support your explanations of why it is important for your friend to read it.

Revision**1 total**

V9A: Revise an essay you have already submitted and have had assessed to make it as good as possible.

Choose any essay that you have already submitted to evaluators. Consider the comments and feedback. Read your own work objectively and think of ways it could accomplish its goals more effectively. Get an idea of what you want to change, rearrange, remove from, or add to the essay to make it better. Then begin to work on the essay directly. To revise means to see anew, so as you revise think of new ways to rewrite the essay as well as to improve the strategies already in use.

Spend extra time on this revision (revision is one of the most important of writing skills), following through with your ideas for improving the work. It is your essay, so it is up to you whether to accept or reject the evaluator's comments and suggestions; either way, attend also to aspects of the essay the evaluator has not commented on. Revision is not just a matter of following instructions: it is a matter of doing whatever is possible to make an essay more effective.

Along with the original essay (including rubrics with commentary) and the revised essay, submit also one full-page of journal-style writing in which you describe why you revised what you did (and maybe also why you did not revise some other parts) and what you intend to achieve through those changes.

Research**2 total**

[It is recommended that you begin research at least one month prior to the essay's due date. Also, remember that when you quote from a book you need to cite the page number for a quotation in text and document the book on a Works Cited page.]

R9A: *Write a research paper that assesses your present preparedness for college or a university.*

Research the entrance requirements of one or more specific colleges or universities. Determine what the application process entails, what must be submitted to gain entrance. Figure out why you want to attend the specific school(s), what you intend to major in, and what your minor might be. Along the way, reflect on what you will need to do specifically in the meantime to gain admittance to the school(s)—for example, do your present writing skills need improvement for you to be able to write successfully in a college/university setting? Is your GPA adequate? Are you prepared to take and pass SATs? What attitudes or values does an institution stress are necessary to succeed in higher education? Present the information you have gathered and learned in a research paper of at least 1500 words, following proper research paper format and manuscript requirements (be sure to include a Works Cited page documenting sources consulted).

R9B: *Write a research paper comparing and contrasting two career choices that you are interested in.*

Research the job descriptions, requirements, and background necessary to obtain a position in those fields, including specialized training or university education, if applicable. Investigate some companies who employ people to do those jobs, and find out what their qualifications for hiring are. Reflect on which career choice is most appealing to you after exploring the information gathered in your research. Present the information you have gathered and learned in a research paper of at least 1500 words, following proper research paper format and manuscript requirements (be sure to include a Works Cited page documenting sources consulted).

Examples: You may have an interest in computers, but you are not sure what employment opportunities are available in the computer field. Two possible careers, of many, within the computer field are web designer and programmer. Or you may have an interest in being a doctor, but you're not sure whether you'd prefer to be a pediatrician, a podiatrist, a heart surgeon, or a veterinarian.

Tenth Grade Prompts

Each prompt has a code. For example, the first eighth grade narrative prompt code is “N8A.” Please record the proper code on your essay to identify the chosen prompt. The top corner of each paper should include Student Name, Teacher (IST) Name, Date, Grade Level, and Prompt Code. All submissions should be typed, double-spaced, in 12-point Times New Roman font.

Self-assessment

1 total

S10A: Write a reflection on your writing.

Consider the work that you completed last year. Keeping your evaluators’ comments in mind, write a reflection of at least 500 words on your writing. Describe your writing process—the steps you go through from start to finish—to transform ideas into a polished final draft. Describe your strengths as a writer and explain how those strengths enable you to write effectively. Also describe your weaknesses as a writer, why these weaknesses exist, and what you can do to improve on them (avoid discussion of mechanical errors such as spelling and punctuation, focusing instead on global aspects of the essay such as creating an effective thesis or developing ideas). Describe your revision process, the methods you use when revising; either include an example of a situation in which revision contributed to making a more effective final draft, or speculate on how your revision process might improve. Lastly, describe what you do to avoid past problems or frustrations you have had with writing; address problems or frustrations such as getting started, procrastination, fulfilling an essay assignment, following through with a thesis, developing ideas, concluding, researching and avoiding plagiarism, or some other facet of writing that concerns you.

One-Draft Writing

1 single-sitting essay

A One-Draft Writing should be submitted before the state test occurs.

In tenth grade, California requires that you complete a writing test in the spring. Therefore, this prompt is practice for your test. You will be asked to write in one of five modes (biographical narrative, expository, response to literature, persuasive, or business letter). You will respond to the prompt in one sitting. You will not see the actual prompt until you sit down to write the essay. Please arrange with your teacher to do the one-draft practice prompt.

Expository

5 total

E10A: Write about the qualities of your favorite song or film.

Choose your favorite song or film, and then write an essay of at least 750 words in which you describe the song or film, what you like about it, and what sets it apart from others. Summarize the song or film with enough detail that readers of your paper unfamiliar with it will be able to understand your discussion, and be sure also to identify the title of it early on in the essay.

Explain what makes this your favorite song or film, and describe its significant qualities or characteristics.

E10B: Write a composition examining your relationship with a person not in your family.

In an essay of at least 750 words, discuss a specific person you know, explaining whether that person is a good or bad friend, good or bad role model, or somewhere in between good or bad. Explain why this person is or is not important to you and why you do or do not value this person. Also, consider

whether the type of friendship or companionship that this person offers you now will still be useful for you later in life. Consider whether the meaning of friendship or companionship changes as people age.

E10C: *Write a composition that analyzes either a children's book or a comic book, treating it as a serious piece of literature.*

Choose from and describe several of the following: setting, point of view, characters, diction, images and/or symbols, and theme. In an essay of at least 750 words, explain the lessons about life that either the children's or comic book intends to teach readers. Determine whether this message is any more or less powerful given the form or genre. If the book includes illustrations, describe the ways these contribute to or distract from the book's message.

E10D: *Write a composition about your favorite book that was not assigned in school.*

In an essay of at least 1000 words, discuss a book you've read that wasn't assigned, explaining why it is one of your favorite books. Summarize enough so that readers unfamiliar with the book will be able to follow your discussion, and discuss fully what about the book qualifies it as one of your favorites. Explain whether you believe other people should read this book, and if so, who?

E10E: *Write a composition that compares and contrasts different types of school systems.*

(To respond to this prompt effectively, you should have experience in more than one type of school system; if not, it is recommended that you do not respond to this prompt.) If you have experience in more than one type of school system, write an essay that compares and contrasts at least two types of school systems, whether public, private, charter, or home-school. In an essay of at least 750 words, discuss the similarities and differences you witnessed and experienced between the two types of schooling. Describe advantages and disadvantages of the different educational settings, explaining which in your experience is more conducive to learning. Also discuss other advantages and disadvantages of both. Be sure to identify what type of school system is best for you, supporting your assertions with evidence and reasons.

Narrative

4 total

N10A: *Write a narrative piece that takes place in your future.*

Check the calendar and your watch, and imagine your world at the same date and time but exactly five years into the future. Think of a specific place and activity for you to be doing at this point in the future. Write a narrative piece of at least 750 words in which you create a day or even a moment in a day exactly five years from now. Describe where you are and what you are doing with specific details so that the reader will be able to visualize your future as well as you do. Let no boundaries stop you from imagining your future. Tell a story that will express your hopes and dreams for the future.

N10B: *Write a narrative piece in which you are a fictional character for a day.*

Choose a character from a novel you have read whom you would like to be for a day. Write a narrative piece of at least 750 words in which you describe that day, being sure early on to identify the character's name and the novel's author and title. Use sensory language that appeals to sight or smell so that readers can virtually experience the setting, and also use language that will express the thoughts, feelings, and emotions you think you would have as that character. Consider the character's dilemma(s) in context of the novel. Reflect on what you think you would learn from the

experience of being this character for a day.

N10C: *Write a composition that reflects on being a person who has lost one of his or her senses.*

Reflect on your various senses—sight, smell, taste, touch, and hearing—and then choose one which you would lose for the purpose of responding to this prompt. In at least 750 words, write a narrative in which you reflect on how your life would be different if you had lost one of your senses. Describe the sense and what it provides you, and then describe what your life would be like without that sense. Discuss how your interactions with people you know and don't know would or would not change, and reflect on whether you believe people would treat you any differently without that one sense. Describe ways that your day-to-day life would differ without that sense. Reflect on the value of that sense to you.

N10D: *Write a composition that reflects on being someone of a gender other than yours.*

In an essay of at least 750 words, describe the circumstances if you were to wake up one day and be of another gender—that is, if you are a boy, write about what life would be like if you suddenly woke up as a girl; or if you are a girl, write about what life would be like if you suddenly woke up as a boy. Trying to avoid the obvious—people who knew you before, of course, would be shocked—describe what your day would be like as a person of a different gender, how your experiences in a given day might be different. Discuss how your interactions with specific people may or may not be different. Explore the sorts of activities you would be expected to do and not to do, explaining what aspects of culture—media, family, education, artifacts like toys and tools, etc.—promote or inhibit those activities. Explore how your concerns might differ if your gender had changed. Explain what sorts of things you would have to be aware of that you are not now given your real-life gender. Additionally, describe the advantages and disadvantages of being that gender and being the gender you were born into, the one you are in real life.

Response to Literature

5 total

[For any essay requiring that you read a long book, make sure you start reading the book about two months before the essay's due date. Also, remember that when you quote from a book you need to cite the page number for a quotation in text and document the book on a Works Cited page.]

L10A: *Write a composition comparing or contrasting the treatment of a theme, issue, or message in two pieces of literature from two different genres.*

Choose two pieces of literature in two different genres (e.g., poem, play, short story, novel) which share a similar theme, issue, or message, about which you have a strong personal feeling. Write an essay of at least 1000 words in which you identify the issue, theme, or message that the two authors address. Describe the similarities and differences in the pieces. Analyze how the genres of the two pieces affect the authors' ways of communicating or expressing their issue, theme, or message.

Example: You might compare Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech to Langston Hughes' short story "Thank You, Ma'am," since both pieces deal with the theme of lack of opportunity and dreams.

L10B: *Write a composition that examines point of view.*

In an essay of at least 1000 words, discuss the point of view in two works of literature of your choice. For each work, consider: Who is telling the story? How would the point of view be characterized—as first, second, or third person point of view; as singular or plural; as omniscient or limited? If the point of view is that of a single character in the story, describe the character: what is

the person's gender, race, or socio-economic class background? What is the person's age, level of maturity? Is the person a reliable narrator, one who may be trusted at all times? If the point of view is limited to one character, is anything in the story lost on or unknown to that character? Also, be sure to describe how point of view in both works of literature contributes to the overall themes.

L10C: Write a composition comparing the messages of two pieces of literature that share the theme of economic class and/or lack of opportunity.

Choose two from the following pieces of literature: *House on Mango Street*, *Great Expectations*, *A Raisin in the Sun*, or *A Tale of Two Cities*. Each of these pieces of literature deals with the theme of economic class and lack of opportunity. Write an essay of at least 1000 words in which you identify the messages of the two pieces you have chosen concerning this theme, and analyze and compare how the authors convey their messages. Choose at least one particular literary device and explain its significance to the theme for each of the two pieces of literature.

Examples: How does the author create her or his characters and settings, and how does this express the messages in the writing? How does the author's word choice get a message across? How does symbolism help express the theme?

L10D: Write a composition comparing the portrayal of women in two pieces of literature.

Choose two pieces of literature that have female main characters who defy contemporary social standards or limitations. Write an essay of at least 1000 words in which you identify the ways the two characters rebel against society, express the authors' messages about women and defiance, compare the portrayal of the two characters, and explain how the characters are relevant today.

Examples: Antonia, a character in 20th century American Literature, and Antigone, in Greek literature—each defy the expectations for women in their respective historical time periods.

L10E: Write a composition comparing an original piece of literature to its film adaptation.

Choose a piece of literature that has been adapted into a film. Write an essay of at least 1000 words in which you analyze how the film adaptation changes the message of the original. Analyze at least three scenes, or three aspects, of both the original and adaptation, and evaluate the success of each in communicating its message. Decide which is better—the original or the adaptation—and support your decision with specific references or quotations.

Examples: *Raisin in the Sun*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Last of the Mohicans*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Julius Caesar*. How does the adaptation interpret certain scenes? Is anything left out? Is anything added? Is the original or the adaptation more effective, moving, or powerful?

Persuasive

4 total

P10A: Write a composition proposing which country you would live in if it could not be the United States.

Choose a country that you have learned about in your world history readings, one in which you would like to live. Write an essay of at least 750 words in which you explain what is attractive about the country, how life in that country is similar or different from life in the United States, and persuade your readers why they too should also consider relocating to that country. Be sure to discuss specific aspects of the country, like location, environment, economy, politics, or other aspects.

P10B: *Write a composition arguing whether or not children should be allowed access to violent video games.*

Take a position on whether children should be allowed to play video games that contain violence. Define and provide examples of video game violence, and also consider what effects the presence or lack of violent games will have on children. Write an essay of at least 750 words in which you express your opinion. Support your opinion with good reasons and evidence from personal experience or the experience of people you know. Consider performing I-search, asking the views of others and incorporating them into your essay.

P10C: *Write a persuasive composition in which you argue the pros and cons of watching television.*

In an essay of at least 750 words, take a position and discuss not only different types of television programming but also how much exposure to different types is good for a person of your age. Describe both advantages and disadvantages of watching television, discussing what may be gained from watching television as well as what may be lost. Consider performing I-search, asking some people you know what their opinions are on watching television so that they can be quoted in the essay and discussed.

P10D: *Write a persuasive composition in which you argue whether a specific technology is good or bad.*

Reflect on various technologies, identifying one that you want to write about. In an essay of at least 750 words, describe a specific technology, explaining both its benefits and drawbacks, and then take a position, arguing whether this technology is beneficial or detrimental. Support your position with sufficient evidence and strong reasons, and anticipate objections to your position, explaining why they are not valid. If you argue to do away with the technology, then consider proposing an alternative technology to replace it.

Revision

1 total

V10A: *Revise an essay you have already submitted and have had assessed to make it as good as possible.*

Choose any essay that you have already submitted to evaluators. Consider the comments and feedback. Read your own work objectively and think of ways it could accomplish its goals more effectively. Get an idea of what you want to change, rearrange, remove from, or add to the essay to make it better. Then begin to work on the essay directly. To revise means to see anew, so as you revise think of new ways to rewrite the essay as well as to improve the strategies already in use.

Spend extra time on this revision (revision is one of the most important of writing skills), following through with your ideas for improving the work. It is your essay, so it is up to you whether to accept or reject the evaluator's comments and suggestions; either way, attend also to aspects of the essay the evaluator has not commented on. Revision is not just a matter of following instructions: it is a matter of doing whatever is possible to make an essay more effective.

Along with the original essay (including rubrics with commentary) and the revised essay, submit also one full-page of journal-style writing in which you describe why you revised what you did (and maybe also why you did not revise some other parts) and what you intend to achieve through those changes.

[It is recommended that you begin research at least one month prior to the essay's due date. Also, remember that when you quote from a book you need to cite the page number for a quotation in text and document the book on a Works Cited page.]

R10A: *Research a historical event of your choice, reading several different accounts of it, and then write an essay in which you assess differences among competing points of view concerning the one event.*

Focus on the ways the different histories have been written—what is emphasized? What are some of the biases embedded in the different takes on the event? Who benefits, and who not, from a particular version of the event? For this research project, read at least three different histories; try to vary between new and old histories (those written recently and those written a long time ago); a documentary may be substituted for one written history. Write a research paper of at least 1500 words that compares and contrasts the ways the histories have been written. Be sure to document the sources used on a Works Cited page.

Examples: To get a good range of views, it may be wise to choose an international event or an event involving more than one nation. For example, researching the conflict over the island-nation of Cyprus would require investigating the positions of both Greece and Turkey. Or researching the battle that took place at the Alamo, now located in Texas, would mean to read histories from both Mexican and American historians, just as would researching the events that led to the transfer of California from Mexico to the U.S.

R10B: *Write a research paper on the effects of a historical event on two foreign nations.*

Choose an historical event or a phenomenon that interests you. Choose two countries other than the United States that were affected by it. Research to what extent the countries were involved in the event or phenomenon, the effects on the people of those countries, and the changes to the countries after the event or phenomenon had taken place. Write a research paper of at least 1500 words in which you compare and contrast the ways these two countries were involved with the event or phenomenon and the ways in which they were affected. Be sure to document the sources used on a Works Cited page.

Examples:

- 1) World War I affected England and Germany, among many other nations. The causes for their involvement in the war could be researched, as well as how the war affected the people of those countries and how the countries were altered by the war.
- 2) New Imperialism, or Colonialism, affected India and Vietnam. Reasons for the occupying countries' choices of location could be researched, as well as how imperialism affected the people of these countries and how the countries later gained independence and what followed.
- 3) Iraq has been drawn into several wars that could also be researched, including WWI and WWII, both of which resulted in the occupation of Iraq by foreign nations.

R10C: *Write a research paper on the practice of marriage in the U.S. and in two other countries.*

In a research paper of at least 1500 words, discuss the role and function of marriage in the U.S. and in at least two other countries, giving attention to whether or not the role and function of marriage has changed over time and is practiced similarly or differently across countries. Discuss what marriage has meant and presently means. Explore what marriage meant in the past and who did and did not participate in it, examining whether all people in a given society practiced it similarly or

differently. Determine in the U.S. and in the other countries you've researched whether marriage is a religious, legal, or social function, a combination of one or more of those, or something else altogether. Lastly, reflect on what marriage means to you and, should it be the case, how you intend to practice it, explaining why. Be sure to document the sources used on a Works Cited page.

Eleventh Grade Prompts

Each prompt has a code. For example, the first eighth grade narrative prompt code is “N8A.” Please record the proper code on your essay to identify the chosen prompt. The top corner of each paper should include Student Name, Teacher (IST) Name, Date, Grade Level, and Prompt Code. All submissions should be typed, double-spaced, in 12-point Times New Roman font.

Self-assessment

1 total

S11A: *Write a reflection on your writing.*

Consider the work that you completed last year. Keeping your evaluators’ comments in mind, write a reflection of at least 500 words on your writing. Describe your writing process—the steps you go through from start to finish—to transform ideas into a polished final draft. Describe your strengths as a writer and explain how those strengths enable you to write effectively. Also describe your weaknesses as a writer, why these weaknesses exist, and what you can do to improve on them (avoid discussion of mechanical errors such as spelling and punctuation, focusing instead on global aspects of the essay such as creating an effective thesis or developing ideas). Describe your revision process, the methods you use when revising; either include an example of a situation in which revision contributed to making a more effective final draft, or speculate on how your revision process might improve. Lastly, describe what you do to avoid past problems or frustrations you have had with writing; address problems or frustrations such as getting started, procrastination, fulfilling an essay assignment, following through with a thesis, developing ideas, concluding, researching and avoiding plagiarism, or some other facet of writing that concerns you.

Expository

6 total

E11A: *Write a composition describing your ideal place to live.*

Choose a place you would like to live—large metropolis, medium-size city, small town, suburb, rural village, desert, mountains, forest, anywhere—that you think would contribute most to your overall happiness and well-being. Write a composition of at least 750 words in which you identify and describe the place you would like to live and explain the reasons for your choice, making clear why that place would be better for you than where you presently reside—how might it meet your needs, goals, or aspirations as an adult? Consider aspects of that place such as environment, social-life, community, economics, politics, etc.

E11B: *Write a composition on the place or environment in which you grew up in relation to who you are today.*

Describe the setting, providing sufficient details to allow readers to get a sense of that place. Explain how that place has or has not influenced who you are. Did it contribute to the values you presently have? Did it affect the ways you now experience space and place? Did it affect your understanding or your self or others in any way? Write a composition of at least 750 words in which you analyze the effects of the environment you grew up in on your present self.

E11C: *Write a plan for your personal future.*

Think of what you will do once you gain a greater degree of independence. Write a composition of at least 750 words in which you reflect on what you have done in your past to prepare for your future, and describe what you plan to do, where you plan to go, and what you plan to achieve in the

next five years. Use specific details in your discussion and explain your plans clearly.

E11D: *Write a composition that defines a word and discusses it in different contexts.*

Pick a word that has different meanings depending on the different contexts it is used in. In an essay of at least 750 words, define what that word means according to a dictionary (denotation), and then discuss situations in which that word's meaning changes according to context (connotation). Describe the different contexts that affect the word's meaning, explaining what of those contexts causes or results in the change in meaning.

E11E: *Write a composition that analyzes a form of media.*

Choose one of the following and then analyze it: a television show, a website, a newspaper, or a magazine. Focus on the entire content. Determine who the audience is for the media you have chosen. Describe who fits that demographic in terms of age, gender, race, and/or socio-economic class. Discuss the goal or intent of the specific media you have chosen, what it wants its audience to take away from it, to learn or understand. Consider what the media's bias is. Provide examples, specific references to the media to support your analysis. Write a composition of at least 750 words in which you first describe the media briefly but adequately enough that a person unfamiliar with that media would be able to follow your discussion and then, second, analyze the media, explaining who the audience for the media is, what its goal is, whether or not it effectively fulfills its goal, what the effects on audience are, and how you have arrived at these conclusions.

E11F: *Practice applying for a job.*

Scan through the employment opportunities of the classified section of a local or nearby newspaper. Find an advertisement for a job that you are interested in. Analyze the advertisement to determine what skills and education level are required (even if you do not possess either or both of these, that's ok—this is just practice). Then create a resume and draft a full-page letter of introduction and intent to accompany the resume as if you were actually applying for the job. Be sure both the resume and letter are formatted properly.

Narrative

4 total

N11A: *Write a story about a character's struggle, set in a specific period of American history.*

Choose a period of American history. Create characters, plot, and setting. Write a narrative of at least 1000 words that explores the struggle of a character or characters against oppressive conditions.

Making clear early on in the essay what the historical period is, describe the struggle, how characters face or deal with it, and what the results are. Choose language that will express your voice and style as well as capture a sense of how language was used in the historical period. Use dialogue that will reveal your message and illustrate the main issues you are exploring. Develop secondary characters who will interact with the main character or characters to illustrate differences in how people respond to the situation or issues. Consider how the ending of your story will affect the message of your narrative.

Examples: Hester Prynne faced gender inequality in *The Scarlet Letter*. Scout experienced racism in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Or you could create your own character(s): 1) write about a poverty-stricken person during the Great Depression or during this decade; 2) write about an Asian American, Mexican American, or African American in the military during a time when their civil rights had been denied at home; 3) write about a recently displaced Native American trying to adjust to life on a reservation; 4) write about a person with a physical disability that makes everyday life difficult; or 5) if applicable,

write about oppressive conditions you are experiencing or have experienced, allowing characters you create and place in a specific time in history to work through those conditions.

N11B: *Write a composition describing your personal experience of a particular work of literature.*

Choose a novel, play, or short story that you have read while learning about literature this year that was important for you personally. Identifying early on the author and title of the work of literature, write a composition of at least 1000 words in which you explain what you learned from the work and its significance to you, using details from your personal experience. As a narration, your essay should be telling a story that relates your engagement with the work of literature. Use descriptive language to help your audience experience the impact the work had on you, and speculate on what lasting effect the work may have on you.

N11C: *Write a composition in which you imagine you are the author of a work of literature you have read this year.*

In an essay of at least 1000 words, narrate the circumstances: explain who you are and what work you are in the process of writing. Describe the setting in which you are writing, and discuss the choices you are making as you are writing the work of literature—as the author, why did you choose those characters and that setting, why that conflict and its resolution, and why that theme or message? What is it you hope readers understand or learn from the work of literature you as author are writing? In the end, reflect on what you see as the strengths and shortcomings of the final product that is the completed work of literature.

N11D: *Write an alternative conclusion to a short story.*

Choose a story you are familiar with, and then reflect on its ending or conclusion. Write an alternative conclusion to that story, one that drastically changes its meaning. Then, write a narrative of about 700 words in which discuss the story in relation to its original conclusion and in relation to the conclusion you've created, explaining what you hoped to achieve in your alternative conclusion and why you crafted it as you did. Discuss how the story's meaning or theme changes as a result of the altered conclusion. Be sure to submit a copy of the story with its original conclusion, your alternative conclusion, and your narrative addressing the above.

Response to Literature

6 total

[For any essay requiring that you read a long book, make sure you start reading the book about two months before the essay's due date. Also, remember that when you quote from a book you need to cite the page number for a quotation in text and document the book on a Works Cited page.]

L11A: *Write a composition analyzing the theme of American identity in two different pieces of literature.*

Choose two pieces of literature that are concerned with the theme of how Americans identify themselves. Write a composition of at least 1500 words in which you analyze how each author portrays American identity; identify the values, beliefs, and ideals each author expresses; and contrast the two authors' portrayals and uses of literary devices and character development. In the end, be sure to explain what, according to each author, it means to be American.

Examples: Much of how Americans identify themselves has to do with how others “see” them and treat them, depending on assumptions about their race, ethnicity, gender, class, and body shape and size. In Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, for example, Janie's grandmother is a slave and sees herself as inferior to white people because other people have defined her as inferior.

Because she is treated as inferior and lives in oppressive conditions, she believes it. What it means for Janie and her grandmother to be American sharply contrasts with what Benjamin Franklin describes in his autobiography. For Franklin, to be an American means freedom of mind, independence of body, and the opportunity to contemplate moral perfection. As African American women, Janie and her grandmother do not have the same privileges as Franklin.

L11B: Write a composition that examines literary representations of your own culture, background, identity, or race or ethnicity.

In an essay of at least 1500 words, examine representations in one or more works of literature of your choice. Giving some attention to setting but mostly focusing on characters, explain whether, according to your experience, you find the representations accurate or not. Are the characters overly simplistic or complex? Are the characters' dreams, aspirations, and desires, as well as conflicts and problems, consistent with how you understand your culture, background, identity, or race or ethnicity? What about their values, their notions of right and wrong? Explain what the author's purpose may be in creating these characters and whether they accurately represent your understanding of your own culture, background, identity, or race or ethnicity.

L11C: Write a composition comparing and contrasting representations of people from backgrounds different than yours in at least two works of literature.

Choose two works of literature—one must be a novel, while the second may be a novel or a play. In an essay of at least 1500 words, describe the qualities, values, dreams, hopes, and aspirations attributed to the characters. Discuss the ways in which the attributes of the characters relate to the conflicts and resolutions of the works of literature. Discuss how these attributes relate to the theme or message of the works. Explain what you believe the authors of the works want readers to understand about these characters, and discuss whether the concerns of those characters are still relevant today.

Examples: Representations of Native Americans characters are found in *The Last of the Mohicans* as well as in the film *Smoke Signals*; *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, *Song of Solomon*, and *As I Lay Dying* provide representations of African Americans characters; while representations of white American characters appear in all of the books mentioned above, three plays that represent whiteness are *Death of a Salesman*, *The Glass Menagerie*, and *The Crucible*.

L11D: Write a composition analyzing the theme of “silence” in relation to female characters in one or more novels.

Choose one or more novels in which female characters struggle with the issue of silence—whether their voices are dismissed by others or they choose to remain silent rather than face dismissal, criticism, or persecution. Write an essay of at least 1500 words in which you identify what the female character or characters are silent about, the causes for their silence, and what message the author is communicating with the theme of silence. Analyze how the author makes use of silence to communicate his or her message. Explain how the characters' struggles with silence relate to contemporary women's struggles.

Examples of works in which “silence” occurs: *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *The Crucible*, *The Scarlet Letter*, and *Song of Solomon*.

L11E: Write a composition analyzing the theme of “masculinity” concerning male characters in one or more novels.

Choose one or more novels in which male characters struggle with masculinity—whether it is the expectation that they will be physically strong, brave, or financially successful, or whether they are

struggling to be masculine in their own way. Write an essay of at least 1500 words in which you define what masculinity means in the works, identify the expectations of masculinity that the male character or characters face, describe how the characters struggle, and explain what message the author is communicating concerning masculinity. Analyze how the author uses masculinity to communicate his or her message. Explain the significance of the author's message and how it applies to men in contemporary society.

Examples of works in which masculinity is depicted: *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, *The Red Badge of Courage*, *The Last of the Mohicans*, *As I Lay Dying*, and *Death of a Salesman*.

L11F: Write a composition that examines language, diction, and metaphor in a work of literature of your choice.

In an essay of at least 1500 words, describe the language of the work, explaining why the author chose that particular language to tell the story. Pay close attention to word choice. Consider the ways that the story's various metaphors mean or make sense in relation to the whole. Examine the language of the general narrative—the various descriptions—as well as that of dialogue among characters. Explain whether the language is formal or informal, simple or complex, rough or delicate, literal or metaphoric, and also be attentive to any shifts among types of language. In the end, be sure to explain how the story's use of language contributes to its overall theme or message.

Persuasive

5 total

P11A: Write an essay persuading either a President or Congress to make a certain decision.

Choose a decision in history made by a President or the Congress of the United States that affected the lives or freedoms of a group or groups of people. Write a 1300 to 1600 word composition in which you imagine you are an advisor to the President or to Congress before that decision was made. Persuade the President or Congress one way or the other— either support the decision that was ultimately made, or convince the President or Congress to take a different course of action (or even inaction). Discuss the possible outcomes of any of the choices. Use strong, logical arguments based on information that would have been available at the time (but do not use the outcome of the actual event as a reason to support that action—it would not have been known at the time). Imagine or predict the way things may have come out differently if a different decision had been made.

Examples: President Van Buren ordered Cherokee Indians to march from Georgia to reservations west of the Mississippi; President Polk declared war on Mexico in order to expand U.S. territory; President Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation; President Franklin Roosevelt ordered citizens of Japanese descent into internment camps after the bombing of Pearl Harbor; President Truman ordered the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki; President Kennedy supported an invasion of Cuba; President Johnson used the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution to declare war on North Vietnam; President Reagan increased nuclear weapon development during the Cold War.

P11B: Write a composition discussing the importance and effects of a specific environmental issue.

Choose an aspect of the Earth's environment that troubles you. Write a 1300 to 1600 word essay in which you describe the problem, discuss its severity, offer a solution or support a solution already available, and convince your audience both that the problem is important and that the audience should support the solution or solutions you offer.

Examples: Global warming, air pollution, water pollution, deforestation, animal extinction, depletion of energy resources, human over population.

P11C: *Write a composition that argues which type of school system is best for you.*

(To respond to this prompt effectively, you should have experience in more than one type of school system; if not, it is recommended that you do not respond to this prompt.) If you have experience in more than one type of school system, write an essay that compares and contrasts at least two types of school systems, whether public, private, charter, or home-school. In an essay of 1300 to 1600 words, discuss the similarities and differences you witnessed and experienced between the two types of schooling while arguing which type of system is more appropriate for your educational needs. Describe advantages and disadvantages of the different educational settings, explaining which in your experience is more conducive to learning. Also discuss other advantages and disadvantages of both. Be sure to identify what type of school system is best for you, supporting your assertions with specific evidence and reasons from your experience.

P11D: *Write a composition that proposes a change in content or method of current educational curriculum.*

In an essay of 1300 to 1600 words, describe a current aspect of curriculum—whether content or delivery—and then propose a change to it—again, whether content or delivery (“delivery” means how it is taught). Consider the curriculum of various school subjects—the information and knowledge—and the ways these are taught or delivered. Then choose one subject, discussing a specific aspect of the curriculum while proposing either a change in the content or the delivery of the curriculum. Be sure to support your proposal with sufficient evidence and persuasive reasons.

Examples:

- 1) Just as there are competing notions of curriculum, there are different types of learners—some learn best by reading, some by hearing, some by doing, and some by a combination of these. Could some aspects of curriculum be shaped and delivered differently to appeal to a wider range of learners?
- 2) Are there ways that a school subject could be made more useful to learners if applied to real-life situations?

P11E: *Write a persuasive letter to a former teacher proposing a change in the way he or she teaches.*

In a letter of 1300 to 1600 words, re-introduce yourself to the former teacher, reminding him or her of the subject(s) he or she had taught you, and describe that teacher’s method of teaching. Discuss what was effective and/or ineffective about that teaching, and then propose to that teacher another way to teach the subject, one that you believe would be more effective for learners like you. Be sure to be detailed and specific, supporting your proposal with sufficient evidence and persuasive reasons. The letter should be formatted properly.

Revision

1 total

V11A: *Revise an essay you have already submitted and have had assessed to make it as good as possible.*

Choose any essay that you have already submitted to evaluators. Consider the comments and feedback. Read your own work objectively and think of ways it could accomplish its goals more effectively. Get an idea of what you want to change, rearrange, remove from, or add to the essay to make it better. Then begin to work on the essay directly. To revise means to see anew, so as you revise think of new ways to rewrite the essay as well as to improve the strategies already in use. Spend extra time on this revision (revision is one of the most important of writing skills), following

through with your ideas for improving the work. It is your essay, so it is up to you whether to accept or reject the evaluator's comments and suggestions; either way, attend also to aspects of the essay the evaluator has not commented on. Revision is not just a matter of following instructions: it is a matter of doing whatever is possible to make an essay more effective. Along with the original essay (including rubrics with commentary) and the revised essay, submit also one full-page of journal-style writing in which you describe why you revised what you did (and maybe also why you did not revise some other parts) and what you intend to achieve through those changes.

Research**3 total**

[It is recommended that you begin research at least one month prior to the essay's due date. Also, remember that when you quote from a book you need to cite the page number for a quotation in text and document the book on a Works Cited page.]

R11A: *Write a research paper analyzing and exploring the relationship between a work of literature and its historical context.*

Choose a work of literature in which a historical event or era is a significant part of the context. Fully research the time period or event. Write a research paper of at least 1500 words in which you analyze how the literature provides insight into the history upon which it is based, and identify the author's message and how it is expressed through what the author emphasizes concerning the historical event(s). Explain what commentary the author is making about that event. Be sure to document the sources used on a Works Cited page.

Examples:

- 1) *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman*, a fictional autobiography, provides a view of slavery in America; research the time period in order to present an informed discussion of the historical events reflected in the fiction as well as analyze the effect of the events on African Americans and white Americans.
- 2) Research legal rights denied people of color, specifically African Americans, in order to understand more fully Zora Neale Hurston's court scene in *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1930).
- 3) Research the effects of the Great Depression on working class people, which would provide insight into John Steinbeck's portrayal of this historical time period in *The Grapes of Wrath*.
- 4) Analyze the effect the Puritans had on the American psyche as reflected through history and as portrayed in *The Scarlet Letter* and in *The Crucible*. 5) Research the effects of war on soldiers in relation to how it is represented in *The Red Badge of Courage*.

R11B: *Write a research paper that compares and contrasts two texts from two different time periods.*

Choose two pieces of literature written in two different time periods which deal with a similar issue or theme, then research that theme in its historical context. Write an essay of at least 1500 words in which you explore the issue or theme in different historical contexts, identify the ways in which the theme is treated differently, and explain the author's reasons for representing the theme in the ways that he or she did. Account for why and how the authors treat the theme differently (without resorting to the obvious: because they were written in different times; instead, try to determine how or what the theme meant in the different times and thus what the authors are responding to, given the different contexts surrounding the theme in the different historical periods). Be sure to document the sources used on a Works Cited page.

Examples: 1) Compare *Gulliver's Travels* with *Brave New World* and the authors' social

commentaries, their critiques of British society. 2) Compare one of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* with one of Shakespeare's plays, picking a theme and comparing and contrasting the treatment of that theme in Medieval literature and in Renaissance literature.

R11C: *Write a research paper analyzing and exploring the relationship between a work of literature and its author.*

Choose a work of literature that interests you, and then research its author's life, experience, and other writings. Read a biography or autobiography of the author. In an essay of at least 1500 words, try to determine why the author wrote the book you are examining and what of its setting, subject, characters, conflict, or resolution are related to the author's life experience or concerns. Explain why the author wrote the work as he or she did and what purpose the writing of that book served for the author, what he or she got out of it. Refer to specific events or experiences in the author's life and to specific passages or portions of the book to support your discussion. Be sure to document the sources used on a Works Cited page.

Twelfth Grade Prompts

Each prompt has a code. For example, the first eighth grade narrative prompt code is “N8A.” Please record the proper code on your essay to identify the chosen prompt. The top corner of each paper should include Student Name, Teacher (IST) Name, Date, Grade Level, and Prompt Code. All submissions should be typed, double-spaced, in 12-point Times New Roman font.

Self-assessment

1 total

S12A: *Write a reflection on your writing.*

Consider the work that you completed last year. Keeping your evaluators’ comments in mind, write a reflection of at least 500 words on your writing. Describe your writing process—the steps you go through from start to finish—to transform ideas into a polished final draft. Describe your strengths as a writer and explain how those strengths enable you to write effectively. Also describe your weaknesses as a writer, why these weaknesses exist, and what you can do to improve on them (avoid discussion of mechanical errors such as spelling and punctuation, focusing instead on global aspects of the essay such as creating an effective thesis or developing ideas). Describe your revision process, the methods you use when revising; either include an example of a situation in which revision contributed to making a more effective final draft, or speculate on how your revision process might improve. Lastly, describe what you do to avoid past problems or frustrations you have had with writing; address problems or frustrations such as getting started, procrastination, fulfilling an essay assignment, following through with a thesis, developing ideas, concluding, researching and avoiding plagiarism, or some other facet of writing that concerns you.

Expository

6 total

E12A: *Write a composition explaining what you’ve chosen to do after graduation.*

Think about what you will do once you have completed 12th grade—attend college or university; enter the job market; balance higher education and employment; raise a family; travel; join the armed services, the Peace Corps, or another organization; do something else altogether different; or perhaps attempt a combination of two or several of the above. Write a composition of at least 1000 words in which you explain your choice and why you made it, explaining clearly what you hope to gain from it. Describe your plans for making this choice into a reality.

E12B: *Write a composition sharing what you wish you had known in 9th grade.*

Think about some of the things you know now which you wish you had known four years ago. Write a composition of at least 1000 words for someone beginning the 9th grade in which you share what you would have liked to have been told at that time concerning the high school experience. Give advice, words of wisdom, and share relevant details from your personal experience that you think will help someone else get through it successfully.

E12C: *Write a letter to a younger person you know who is struggling with school.*

In at least 1000 words, give that person some practical advice, based on your experience, for improving his or her performance in school. Consider describing both successes and difficulties in your own experience that this person could learn from. Describe in detail specific actions this person can take to do better in school.

E12D: *Write a composition on the most and least useful things you learned in school.*

In an essay of at least 1000 words, discuss the most useful things you learned through school, whether they concern educational subjects or something else. Also discuss the least useful things you learned in school. Make clear why these things have and have not been useful or important to you.

E12E: *Write a composition that describes your own company.*

Imagine that you are the CEO or president of your own company. In an essay of at least 1000 words, name the company and its location, describe what it does (make a product? provide a service? etc.), discuss what your role is, discuss what other people (if there are any) involved with the company do, and describe what the goals of the company are, both short- and long-term. Make clear why this company is useful or necessary.

E12F: *Practice writing a statement of purpose to a college or university.*

Most colleges and universities require, along with evidence of your educational record (such as transcripts and SAT scores), submission of a statement of purpose. A statement of purpose should explain why you want to pursue higher education, what your intended field of study or major is, why you desire to study that field, and why you want to study it at that college or university. In at least 1000 words, respond to the above in a statement of purpose to a specific college or university. Be sure to address the statement to the specific college or university you'd like to attend.

Narrative

6 total

N12A: *Write a revisionist fairy tale.*

Choose a fairy tale that follows the same themes and archetypes of most fairy tales—beautiful princess, handsome prince, evil sorceress, a quest, a “happily ever after” ending, etc. Write a revision of the fairy tale in at least 1000 words, in which the stereotypes are challenged or eliminated. Consider the message you wish to send to your audience. Use descriptive language and strong dialogue to bring your setting and characters to life. Make your point of view and response to the original fairy tale clear.

Example: The film *Shrek* is an example of a revisionist fairy tale—*Shrek* challenges many fairy tale stereotypes, most notably that of the handsome hero and useless pretty princess.

N12B: *Write a narrative about a conversation between you and a person of your choice.*

Choose any person—from any time in history, from the past or present—and create a conversation with this person, describing in a narrative of at least 1000 words what you two talk about. Be sure to identify the person early on. Describe the setting, making it clear why you want to converse with this person in that particular setting, and narrate the conversation, making the dialogue sound as real as possible. Since you have the opportunity here to have a conversation with anyone about anything, consider taking the opportunity to converse on worthwhile, meaningful concerns and subjects.

N12C: *Write a narrative involving your family or friends concerning an issue important to you.*

Set up the narrative as a screenplay or television show, including three Acts. (Each Act, then, will need to set up suspense and drive toward a conflict. Think of the way a television show is paced between commercials: in this case, two commercial breaks—the first Act introduces characters and the setting, hinting toward a potential conflict; the second Act spells out the conditions of the

conflict, leads up to it, and then presents the conflict; and the third Act resolves, or perhaps in some cases cannot resolve, the conflict.) Let the conversations and actions of characters be the primary vehicle for expression, relying on stage directions as little as possible. The narrative should be at least 1000 words.

N12D: *Write a story about a phone conversation with the President of the United States.*

Write a first-person narrative of at least 1000 words in which you receive a phone call from the President asking for your advice on an issue. Describe the setting, and then narrate the conversation, making clear both the President's initial inquiry and the give-and-take of the conversation. Conclude with an explanation of why you told the President what you did and what you hope will be achieved.

N12E: *Write a narrative about a march on Washington, D.C., or a speech to Congress.*

Choose an issue you care deeply about, and then reflect on the message you want to send to decision-makers. Then decide whether your message will be best heard through a protest march or a speech. In a narrative of at least 1000 words, describe your course of action. If a march, describe the goals and intent of the march, who is involved, what slogans, banners, and/or posters you and your fellow activists would carry, and what the intended messages of these would be; if a speech, consider also who your opposition would be and also what your response to that opposition would be. If a speech, describe the setting—what does it look like and feel like to be addressing Congress?—and write out the speech, clarifying the issue and what you want Congress to do about it. Whether you narrate a march or a speech, be sure to make clear specifically what it is that you want changed and why.

N12F: *Write a reflective narrative about your belief system.*

In at least 1000 words, explain what you believe—and why—about life, the universe, or whatever is significant to you. Discuss the origins of your belief system and why you have adopted it. Narrate an experience in which your belief system helped you to make a difficult decision. Reflect on what you personally gain from your beliefs. Consider how your life might be different, for better or worse, without that belief system.

Response to Literature

6 total

[For any essay requiring that you read a long book, make sure you start reading the book about two months before the essay's due date. Also, remember that when you quote from a book you need to cite the page number for a quotation in text and document the book on a Works Cited page.]

L12A: *Write a composition comparing two works of literature in any way.*

Choose two pieces of writing that you have experienced while learning about literature this year, both of which share some common thread—in content, theme, style, genre, use of literary device, etc. Write an essay of at least 1500 words in which you focus on the common thread and explore and analyze the similarities and differences between the two pieces of literature. Be sure to make clear the importance of what you have identified as the common thread to the two works of literature.

L12B: *Write a composition that examines genre, form, and structure.*

In an essay of at least 1500 words, discuss the genre, form, and structure of a work of literature of your choice. Define these terms, and then discuss them specifically in relation to the work of

literature you have chosen. Explain why the author chose that particular genre, as opposed to other possibilities, to convey the work of literature's message. Explain why the author chose that form and structured the story that way to convey the message. Explain whether or not the message is more or less effectively conveyed by use of the particular genre, form, and structure.

Example: Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club* is a novel (genre), set up in four parts (form), and each part consists of several chapters (structure). The various chapters are not linear or chronological; rather, each chapter within the part refers back to and develops notions introduced in earlier chapters, creating a weaving effect. So to respond to this prompt using *The Joy Luck Club* several concepts could be addressed, including but not limited to—Would the story be more or less effective if it was expressed in a different genre (play, film, poem, etc.)? Would it be more or less effective if its form or structure were different in the novel genre or in another genre?

L12C: Write a composition that analyzes a form of discrimination in a novel of your choice.

In an essay of at least 1500 words, describe the form of discrimination that appears in the novel—whether it involves ethnocentrism, racism, sexism, ageism; discrimination toward disability or body size; or discrimination in any other form. Describe the discriminatory actions and/or language, identifying the source(s) of it. Describe how those who discriminate feel about it as well as those who are discriminated against. Explain whether the discrimination results in oppression or repression. Discuss why the author chose to represent discrimination as he or she does, and interpret the author's intent—to illuminate the issue, to motivate readers to take action, to change opinion, etc. Explain the significance of the author's message then as well as now. Support all your claims with textual evidence.

L12D: Write a composition analyzing a novel's treatment of the issue of African American oppression.

Choose a novel concerning the oppression of African Americans, such as *Invisible Man*, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, *Black Boy*, *Confessions of Nat Turner*, or *Native Son*. Write an essay of at least 1500 words in which you identify the specific criticisms the author makes regarding the oppression of African Americans, the author's messages about racism and white privilege, and the particular struggles the characters deal with. Analyze the author's character development in the midst of oppressive conditions and identify ways the characters adhere to or challenge stereotypes. Interpret the author's intent—to illuminate issues, to motivate readers to take action, to change opinion, etc. Explain the significance of the author's message then as well as now. Support all your claims with textual evidence.

Example: In the introduction to *Native Son* (1940), "How 'Bigger' was Born," Richard Wright explains that his book is a direct response to the political, social, and historical inequalities and injustices experienced by African Americans in the 1930s. His book is also a response to white brutality inflicted upon African Americans who challenged the Jim Crow Laws; these laws defined African Americans as inferior beings who could not sit next to whites, eat in "white restaurants," use the same restrooms, live in desegregated neighborhoods, etc. Wright explains that the only African Americans he knew who resisted or questioned the segregation laws were "shot, hanged, maimed, lynched, and generally hounded until they were either dead or their spirits were broken" (xi).

L12E: Write a composition analyzing a novel's treatment of gender relations.

Choose a novel in which inequality between men and women is an important theme. Write an essay of at least 1500 words in which you describe the male and female gender roles in the novel you have chosen and identify the ways in which the characters struggle against those roles. Analyze the author's treatment of gender issues to identify the author's message about gender roles.

Examples: *The Joy Luck Club*, *Jane Eyre*, *Madame Bovary*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Wuthering Heights*,

A Doll's House. It may be useful to consider the specific messages about gender roles in the context of marriage, in employment opportunities, in leisurely activities, or through the author's treatment of gendered stereotypes.

L12F: *Write a composition analyzing the treatment of the issues of science, power, and culture in literature.*

Write an essay of at least 1500 words in which you compare the way the authors of *Frankenstein* and of *Brave New World* treat the themes of science, power, and culture. Identify the messages about these themes, what effects of science upon culture they portray, who they are saying controls or has power over science (who is the authority on telling “good” from “bad” science and on what scientists may or may not do), and what they are saying are the benefits, risks, or likely outcomes of science. Analyze how these portrayals and messages about science apply to modern times and what contemporary readers may learn about science, power, and culture from reading these books.

Persuasive

7 total

P12A: *Write an essay in which you persuade your audience to join a particular political party.*

Choose or invent a political party. Write a persuasive composition of at least 1000 words in which you argue that your political party is the best choice. Give logical and thoughtful reasons why one should align oneself with your party. As you write, remember that your audience may be a member of one of several various political parties: Republican, Democrat, Libertarian, Socialist, Green Party, etc. Persuade your audience that the values and agenda of your party make it the proper choice for them. Discuss in detail at least one important item on your party's agenda and its position on it.

P12B: *Write an essay in which you critique your preferred political party's platform or position on one or two specific issues.*

Identify the party, and describe the issue(s) and your party's position(s). Explain where you disagree with the party, and propose how you prefer that the party would treat the issue, what position you believe it should take. In an essay of at least 1000 words, persuade your party to change its position(s) concerning one or two issues, using language that respects your party's values and beliefs but that also appeals to those values and beliefs to sway members of the party to adopt your views. Anticipate the party's responses to your position, explaining why those responses are not as valid as yours.

P12C: *Write a letter to an editor of a local or national newspaper that persuades readers to support a reform.*

Choose an aspect of your community that you would like to see changed. Write a letter of at least 1000 words to the editor of a newspaper in which you explain the problem, persuade your audience that something should be done, describe the best solution or solutions, and explain what steps your audience should take. Use language that appeals to the audience's needs and values, and anticipate its responses. Use correct letter format.

Examples: An environmental issue; a community issue such as noise pollution or traffic gridlock; a social issue like homelessness or health care; or a political issue like appropriate uses of taxation or of the National Guard.

P12D: *Write a persuasive essay in which you argue to change or maintain the U.S.'s current laws that apply to 18-year-olds.*

In at least 1000 words, write a persuasive essay in which you identify one or more current law affecting 18-year-olds that you believe should be changed or maintained as is. Explain why you believe the law is faulty or justified, providing sufficient evidence and good reasons to support your position. Use language that appeals to your opposition's values and needs, and anticipate that opposition's objections to your proposal.

P12E: *Write a proposal for a school course.*

What subjects are not taught but you believe should be? Or, what subjects are taught but you believe could be better and more effectively designed? In at least 1000 words, identify a course that you believe should be taught or could be better taught, and then propose that the course be adopted as you describe it. Explain the information and knowledge that should be part of that course, how that information and knowledge should be taught, and what processes and activities should be used both to teach the course and to assess student learning. Persuade readers why the course should be adopted, what students will learn from it, why it is important that students learn this material, and what longer, larger long-term effects may result from incorporating this course into school curriculum.

P12F: *Design a prompt and argue that it should be adopted here.*

Design and write out a prompt that you believe should be included here for future Gorman Learning Center students to respond to. Choose a grade level (either 9th, 10th, 11th, or 12th) and a mode (either exposition, narrative, response to literature, persuasive, or research). Craft a prompt, in a format similar to the prompts that appear here. Then, using between 800 to 1000 words, argue why that prompt should be adopted and included here. Explain the educational value of the prompt, describing what it will teach students. Identify the skills it will require students to use and hone. Describe what it offers students that present prompts do not. Be sure to submit both the prompt and argument for its adoption.

P12G: *Practice applying for a job.*

Scan through the employment opportunities of the classified section of a local or nearby newspaper. Find an advertisement for a job that you are interested in; it may be a job that you would like in the future but are not yet qualified to apply for. Analyze the advertisement to determine what skills and education level are required (even if you do not possess either or both of these, that's ok—this is just practice). Then create a resume and draft a full-page letter of introduction and intent to accompany the resume as if you were actually applying for the job. The letter should be persuasive, outlining your qualifications for the job while appealing to the values and needs of the company you are applying to. Be sure both the resume and letter are formatted properly.

Revision

1 total

V12A: *Revise an essay you have already submitted and have had assessed to make it as good as possible.*

Choose any essay that you have already submitted to evaluators. Consider the comments and feedback. Read your own work objectively and think of ways it could accomplish its goals more effectively. Get an idea of what you want to change, rearrange, remove from, or add to the essay to

make it better. Then begin to work on the essay directly. To revise means to see anew, so as you revise think of new ways to rewrite the essay as well as to improve the strategies already in use. Spend extra time on this revision (revision is one of the most important of writing skills), following through with your ideas for improving the work. It is your essay, so it is up to you whether to accept or reject the evaluator's comments and suggestions; either way, attend also to aspects of the essay the evaluator has not commented on. Revision is not just a matter of following instructions: it is a matter of doing whatever is possible to make an essay more effective.

Along with the original essay (including rubrics with commentary) and the revised essay, submit also one full-page of journal-style writing in which you describe why you revised what you did (and maybe also why you did not revise some other parts) and what you intend to achieve through those changes.

Research

6 total

[It is recommended that you begin research at least one month prior to the essay's due date. Also, remember that when you quote from a book you need to cite the page number for a quotation in text and document the book on a Works Cited page.]

R12A: *Write a research paper analyzing the assertion of power of one of the three branches of American government at one point in history.*

Choose one of the three branches of American government—executive, legislative, judicial—and a particular historical period in which one of the three branches asserted power. Write a research paper of at least 1500 words in which you describe how the government branch asserted its authority and discuss its effect on the other two branches, both then and in the long term. Be sure to document the sources used on a Works Cited page.

Examples: The Supreme Court has, at various times in history, made rulings that have affected the nation in a dramatic fashion: *Roe v. Wade*, *Brown v. the Board of Education*, etc. To explore either of these, research the Court cases and present the outcomes of the rulings as well as the effects on Congress and on the President's policies in the wake of the rulings. Or, at times a President has usurped the Congress's authority to declare war; research an instance in which this was done and the effects on the Congress's authority. Or, at times Congress has refused to pass a President's legislation; research an instance in which this occurred, explaining the significance of such legislative challenges to executive power.

R12B: *Write a research paper analyzing the role of the Supreme Court in U.S. history.*

Write a research paper of at least 1500 words in which you discuss why the Supreme Court was founded, what its role has been historically in the U.S., and how, if at all, that role has changed over time. Discuss a few of the more prominent judges throughout the Court's history and why they have been important. Describe a few of the more important cases the Court has presided over and why these have been important. Discuss the effects the Court has had on the other prominent branches of government—executive and legislative—as well as on the public. Lastly, describe what you believe should be the Court's role today and whether your belief is consistent with the original intentions of the founding of the Supreme Court. Be sure to document the sources used on a Works Cited page.

R12C: *Write a research paper exploring the beginning of American democracy and how America has or has not lived up to its founding principles.*

Research the reasons and goals of the founders of American democracy as they wrote the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights. Write a research paper of at

least 1500 words in which you identify what the framers and writers of these documents intended to accomplish, what they wished to protect, what they were most concerned with, and what they most feared. Then explain whether America has kept to the original ideas behind these documents, whether the society or government has taken a different direction than the original intents of its founders, and if so whether you believe these changes have been for better or worse. Be sure to document the sources used on a Works Cited page.

Examples: There have been times in American history when citizens have been denied the rights expressed in those founding documents. You might identify the justifications which were provided and explain whether the reasons were or were not in line with what the founders had in mind. You might use contemporary governmental decisions to speculate on whether something similar may reoccur or on the conditions under which such may reoccur.

R12D: *Write a research paper in which you explore the relationship between capitalism and democracy.*

Write a research paper of at least 1500 words in which you explain the differences between capitalism and democracy, illustrate the powers held by corporations and capitalist institutions in the United States, and discuss any conflicts between the rules of capitalism and the premises of democracy. Describe a current event or two as an example to examine ways that capitalism and democracy may or may not contradict each other. Be sure to document the sources used on a Works Cited page.

R12E: *Write a research paper examining propaganda in current media.*

Write a research paper of at least 1500 words that defines propaganda, and then analyze the content of a media of your choice to determine whether or not that media is disseminating propaganda. Analyze how the media disseminates its content as well as the content itself. Determine whose interest the propaganda serves should it be the case that the media you examine is indeed engaging in the dissemination of propaganda. Should it be the case that the media you examine is not disseminating propaganda, then explain what makes that media's content or means of dispense not propagandistic. Discuss why a media would resort to propaganda and reflect on the effects of propaganda on both the dispensers and the receivers of it. Be sure to document the sources used on a Works Cited page.

R12F: *Write a research paper comparing Joseph Conrad's message in Heart of Darkness to other perspectives on colonialism.*

Research the motives, reasons, and effects of colonialism, writings which uphold the popular belief that colonialism is harmless or helpful to the conquered people, writings which criticize colonialism, and writings which express a viewpoint somewhere between the extremes. Write a research paper of at least 1500 words in which you define colonialism and compare and contrast the perspectives you have discovered in your research with the view expressed by Joseph Conrad in *Heart of Darkness*. Explain how these perspectives, Conrad's included, are relevant (or not) to colonialism in other historical situations than those to which they are responding. Be sure to document the sources used on a Works Cited page.