

  
Version 13

# 全トピック一覧

## TOPIC LIST

Rev. 2015.6.24

■ Writer's Sample (サンプルエッセイ) について ■

- ・ 4th ~ 12th Grade における Writer's Sample は各 Grade につき一つのみとなります
- ・ College, GRE, TOEFL はトピックごとに Writer's Sample の有無が異なります

## INDEX

Elementary School	2
4th Grade	2
5th Grade	5
Middle School	8
6th Grade	8
7th Grade	10
8th Grade	12
High School	16
9th grade	16
10th Grade	18
11th Grade / College Prep	20
12th Grade / College Prep	23
College	27
College Level Preparatory	27
College Level I – General	28
College Level I – Business-Focused	32
College Level II – General	34
College Level II – Business-Focused	38
GRE テスト	41
Perspective on an Issue	41
Analyze an Argument	41
TOEFL テスト	43

## 4th Grade

### A Helpful Wish (Cause & Effect)

A genie has just popped out of your bottle of juice! He offers to grant one wish, but only if you use that wish to help someone other than yourself. Before the genie disappears, he tells you to write your wish and leave it in the refrigerator for him. In order for your wish to be granted, you must explain to the genie how the granting of your wish will help somebody else. Be specific!

### A New Season (Cause & Effect)

When winter is over and spring arrives, the days get longer and the weather gets warmer. How do the longer days and warmer weather cause changes in what you do each day? Do you wear different clothes? Do you take part in different activities? Write an essay explaining how your days are different when spring arrives. Provide specific examples in your response.

### Castle (Narrative)

One morning a child looks out the window and discovers that a huge castle has appeared overnight. The child rushes outside to the castle and hears strange sounds coming from it. Someone is living in the castle! The castle door creaks open. The child goes in. Write a story about who the child meets and what happens inside the castle.

### Choose a Pet (Persuasive)

Many people have a pet such as a dog, bird, or snake. If you could have any pet, what would you choose? Describe the pet you would want and give three reasons for your choice.

### Different Jobs (Compare & Contrast)

What kind of job do you think you'll have when you grow up? Will you be a teacher? A firefighter? A chef? Write an essay comparing two different jobs that you think might be interesting. What do the two jobs have in common? How are the two jobs different? Use specific details to show the similarities and differences between the two jobs.

### Directions Home (Process)

A school friend is coming over to your house for the first time and needs directions. Your friend can get to your school but does not know the rest of the way. Write an essay that gives step-by-step directions explaining how to get from your school to your home. Be sure to include important details such as how long the walk or drive will take, what landmarks they can expect to see on the way, and how to recognize your house or building.

### Dog Park (Persuasive)

A new park is about to open in the neighborhood. Some of the people want the park to be "dog-friendly." They want a place where owners can take their dogs and let their dogs play without wearing leashes. Other people want the park to require leashes on dogs at all times. What do you think? Why? Write an essay to convince readers that your position is correct.

### Dream Playground (Descriptive)

Your town is planning to build a new playground, and it is sponsoring a "Dream Playground" contest. Each child in town has been asked to submit a description of the perfect playground. The town will use the entries to plan the playground, and the child with the best "Dream Playground" will get to choose the name for the new playground. Write an essay describing your perfect playground. Include details about what it contains, how it looks, and what children will do there.

### Favorite Object (Informative)

We all have favorite objects that we care about and would not want to give up. Think of one object that is important or valuable to you. For example, it could be a book, a piece of clothing, a game, or any object you care about. Write about your favorite object. Be sure to describe the object and explain why it is valuable or important to you.

### Favorite TV Show (Persuasive)

Think about your favorite TV show. Pretend that a friend has never seen it. Write a letter telling your friend why he or she should watch the show. Include three reasons why you like this show. Also give examples from the show to support your reasons.

### Flying Mop (Narrative)

"One day Simon was walking down the street near his house when he saw a beat up old mop lying on the sidewalk. He picked up the mop and soon discovered that it was no ordinary mop. If he got on it he could fly! The mop was so fast that Simon could fly anywhere in the world." Where do you think this flying mop came from? Where does Simon go on his mop? Use your imagination to write a story about Simon's adventures with the flying mop.

### **Getting Ready (Process)**

What do you do to get ready for school? Write out your morning activities, starting with the moment you wake up. Include all the things you do before you arrive at school. Your essay should describe your morning so that the reader knows exactly what you do.

### **Guest Author (Persuasive)**

To celebrate the opening of its new children's section, your local library will invite a famous author of children's books to speak to area children and read from his or her books. Which author would you most like to meet? Write an essay to persuade the library staff to invite your favorite author to the celebration. Be sure to include reasons and examples to support your choice.

### **Home and Away (Compare-Contrast)**

Think about a fun trip that you would like to take. Describe where you would go. Then explain three ways that this place is similar to where you live and three ways that it is different.

### **Household Chore (Cause & Effect)**

Think of a household chore done regularly by you or someone in your family. What would happen if you suddenly stopped doing it? Write an essay describing how life in your house would change if nobody did this chore.

### **Instructions for Sub (Process)**

Your teacher has taken a day off and has forgotten to leave a note for the substitute. Can you help the substitute by explaining how to start class and move through the day? What little details might the sub need to know to get through the day smoothly? Don't leave anything out. The substitute and your teacher are counting on you!

### **Interesting Dream (Descriptive)**

Think about a happy, funny, or weird dream that you've had. It can be a dream that you just had or from when you were much younger. Describe this dream. Include everything that you saw, heard, and did. Also include how you felt during it.

### **Invisible Friend (Persuasive)**

Read the letter below. Pretend this letter is from an imaginary friend that you have had since kindergarten. Think about what you could say that would help your friend decide to become visible. Write a letter to your imaginary friend. Convince your friend to become visible. In your letter, use details and examples.

To My Best Friend, You are my best and only friend because only you can see or hear me. To everyone else, I am completely invisible. Last night on my tenth birthday I figured out how to make myself visible. But I'm afraid. I like living in your imagination. I'm not too sure I'd like living in the real world. Who will take care of me? What would I do for fun? Who would be my friend besides you? Do you think I should become visible? Why do you think I should? Besides being with you, what is so great about being visible?

Sincerely, Your confused friend

### **Let's Play (Process)**

Imagine that you would like to teach other kids some of the games you know. Write instructions on how to play a simple game such as "Hide and Seek." Pretend the other kids have never heard of the game before. Include all the facts and directions they will need to play the game.

### **Lost Time (Narrative)**

"Tyler has a special clock. When he turns the clock off, time stands still. Everyone around him freezes in place until he turns the clock on again. Only Tyler can move around or remember what happens when the clock is off." When does Tyler use the special clock, and how does he spend his time when the clock is stopped? Use your imagination to write a story about Tyler and his mysterious clock.

### **Making Friends (Process)**

Pretend that your class publishes a newspaper. Your classmates write to you and ask for help. You then tell them what they should do. You just got this letter: Dear Secret Helper, I am 10 years old. I just moved to a new school. I miss my old friends a lot. I want to make new friends! But I don't know what to do. How can I make lots of new friends? Yours truly, Amy Can you help Amy? Answer her letter. In it, describe what she can do to make friends. Give all of the ways she can develop friendships/ friends.

### **No Technology (Cause & Effect)**

Imagine your life without technology. It would mean we would not have cars, telephones, computers, or televisions. How would this affect your daily life? Explain how your life would change if we didn't have technology.

**Non-School Clothes (Descriptive)**

Do you have clothes that you wear for different activities? Are they play clothes or special-event clothes? Do the clothes show that you are a member of a group? Choose one set of clothes. Write an essay describing these clothes. Explain what they look like and how they feel and how you feel wearing them. What activities do you enjoy while wearing these clothes?

**Outside in the Rain (Descriptive)**

Think about a time you were outside in the rain. Describe what happened. Include how the rain looked, sounded, felt, and smelled.

**Party Plans (Persuasive)**

Your class is planning a party at the end of the school year. How would you decorate the classroom for the celebration? What would you do at the party? Write an essay describing your idea for the party and give at least three reasons why your idea would be fun.

**Pet Dragon (Narrative)**

Imagine you just found a baby dragon alone in the park. What does the dragon look like? How did it get to the park? What will you do with it? Write a story about what happens to you and your new pet dragon.

**Pick a Room (Persuasive)**

The recreation center in your neighborhood is trying to decide what to do with an unused room. One group has suggested that the room could be used as a game room. Another group wants the room to have computers and tables so that local children can use the room to do homework. Write a letter to the recreation center arguing in favor of either the game room or the homework room. Be sure to offer specific reasons and examples to support your choice.

**Prepare a Meal (Process)**

Think of a meal you know how to make. It can be something simple you prepare for breakfast, lunch, or dinner. Explain how to make this meal.

**School Subjects (Compare-Contrast)**

What is your favorite subject in school? What subject is your least favorite? Describe both subjects. Then tell how they are alike and how they are different.

**Strange Water Glass (Narrative)**

"Marisa stares at the strange water glass. She knows she shouldn't touch anything in the old MacGregor house. Her mother has warned her. But she is just too curious. She quickly picks up the glass and drinks the bubbling, green drink. Suddenly she finds herself changing!" What happens to Marisa? Does she ever become herself again? Finish the story. Use your imagination!

**Talking Frog (Narrative)**

"One day, Kathy was walking home from school. She noticed a frog was following her. She was surprised. "Why would a frog do that?" she thought. She was even more surprised when it started to speak to her!" What does the frog say? Why does it want to talk to Kathy? What happens next? Finish the story. Be creative!

**That Smells Great! (Descriptive)**

What is your favorite scent? Does it come from a food, a flower, a place, an event, or something else? Write an essay describing your favorite scent. Make your description vivid so that others can understand why the scent is your favorite.

**Ways to Play (Compare and Contrast)**

Some people like to play outside on the weekends. Other people prefer to do things indoors. Write an essay comparing ways to play inside and outside. How are they alike? How are they different? Be sure to include at least two ways that they are alike and two ways that they are different.

# 5th Grade

## **Be a Detective (Narrative)**

You are a famous detective. You have just been hired to find out why the school lunches tasted awful last week. It's a difficult job, but you're ready for it! What do you do? How do you solve the case? What do you find out? Write a story about what happens. Use your imagination!

## **Be a Super Hero (Narrative)**

Suppose you woke up and found out that you had become a super hero for a day. What happened? What powers did you have? What did you do? Write a story about your day. Be creative!

## **Best Friends (Compare-Contrast)**

People can be different in some ways yet still be best friends. Describe you and your best friend. Then explain two ways that you are similar and two ways that you are different. Give examples to show how you are alike and different.

## **Birthday Bash (Process)**

You've been asked to plan the perfect birthday party, and you want to write your plan down step by step to be sure you don't leave anything out. What do you do first? What important steps come next? You may pick a certain age or theme, but don't forget a single detail.

## **Character to Dinner (Narrative)**

Your favorite character from a book, cartoon, television show, or movie has come to dinner at your house. What a night! Use your imagination to tell which character visits and what happens.

## **Chores (Persuasive)**

Many parents give their children certain chores or tasks to do at home. Should children have to do chores or tasks at home? Be sure to explain why you think it is a good idea or a bad idea. Include examples to support your reasons.

## **Cousin (Descriptive)**

Pretend that you have a cousin you've never met. Your cousin lives in another state, but you want him or her to get to know you. Write a letter to your cousin describing yourself. Include what you look like, your personality, and your interests.

## **Dream Blending (Narrative)**

Imagine that you fell asleep while reading your history textbook and your favorite storybook at the same time. What would happen if the two stories came together in your dream? Use your imagination to rewrite your favorite story in a different time period in history.

## **Earn Money (Process)**

Pretend that your class publishes a newspaper. Your classmates write to you and ask for help. You then tell them what they should do. You just got this letter: Dear Secret Helper, I am in fifth grade. I really want a bike! All my friends have bikes. But I only have \$5. How can I make money for a bike? Help! Your friend, Jimmy Can you help Jimmy? Answer his letter. Describe one way he can make money for his bike and write in detail everything Jimmy needs to do to earn enough money for the bike.

## **Favorite Animal (Descriptive)**

Of all the wild animals that you have ever seen in a zoo, movie, or book, what is your favorite? Which animal would you most like for a friend? Write an essay describing your favorite animal, including its appearance, its habitat, and its behavior. Explain why the animal is your favorite.

## **Feeling Happy (Descriptive)**

Think about something that made you happy recently. Describe fully what happened and how you felt. Also explain why it made you feel that way.

## **Foods for Health (Cause and Effect)**

We need to eat many different kinds of foods to grow strong and healthy. Write a description of at least three foods you think are needed for a healthful diet. Explain the benefit each food brings to you. Also describe what you think would happen to your body if you did not eat these healthy foods.

### **Getting Taller (Cause & Effect)**

According to scientists, humans, on average, are much taller than they were 100 years ago. Imagine what would happen if the average height of humans suddenly increased by a foot. Write an essay explaining the effects of this sudden increase in height. Be sure to describe the problems this sudden height change might create and what people would need to do to adapt.

### **Grocery Town (Narrative)**

Imagine that the grocery store is a town where different foods live. Write a story about a day in Grocery Town when one of the foods does something that changed the lives of all the foods in the town. What did the food do? What happened to it and to the other foods afterward?

### **Hot Air Balloon (Descriptive)**

You won a free hot-air-balloon ride. What was it like in the balloon? How did you feel as you soared into the sky? What did you see below you? What sounds did you hear? Write an essay describing the sights, sounds, and sensations of your balloon flight.

### **In the Doghouse (Cause & Effect)**

It was your turn to feed the dog this morning, but you forgot! You rush home from school, but when you enter the kitchen you realize you are too late. The bottom cabinets are wide open, and empty dog food bags and cereal boxes are all over the floor. Your dog is fast asleep on the couch. Write an apology to your parents (and your dog) explaining what happened and why.

### **Internet Use (Process)**

Imagine that your uncle is visiting your family, and he wants to use your family's computer to read the news from his home state. Unfortunately, he has never used a computer before. Your parents have asked you to show him how to turn on the computer, access the Internet, and, if possible, find a website with the news from his home state. Write a detailed essay describing the steps your uncle will need to follow to use the computer. Don't forget to explain details that might seem obvious, such as where the power switch is and how to use the mouse.

### **Library (Process)**

Imagine that a new student has come to your school, and your teacher has asked you to show him around. Your school library has a different system from that of his old school. Write instructions to help the new student become familiar with the library's system. Explain how to find a book and how to check it out from the school library.

### **Make a Change (Cause-Effect)**

Think of something in your school which needs to be changed. Describe why it has to be changed. Explain how this change will affect students.

### **Monday and Friday (Compare and Contrast)**

Mondays and Fridays are both school days; however, they are different in some ways. Write an essay describing what Mondays are like, including how you feel and what you do on Mondays. Then, describe what Fridays are like. Explain two ways that Mondays and Fridays are similar, and explain two ways that they are different. Include examples to support your points.

### **New Subject to Study (Persuasive)**

Imagine that your teacher wants to teach a new subject for the next few weeks. Your teacher will take suggestions, and then let the students vote on the new subject. What subject should your class choose? Write an essay to support your choice and to persuade the other students to vote for your choice.

### **No Rules (Cause-Effect)**

Pretend you woke up one day and there were no rules. People could suddenly do whatever they wanted! Explain what the world would be like. Use your imagination!

### **Person for a Stamp (Persuasive)**

A lot of famous or important people have had their faces on postage stamps. Who would you nominate to appear on a new stamp? Why do you admire this person? Why should they be recognized in this way? Offer specific support for your choice.

### **Playing Games (Compare & Contrast)**

Almost everyone likes to play games. After all, with sports, board games, card games, word games, and computer games there's something for everyone. Think about two different games you like to play. What are the rules? When do you play the games? What kinds of equipment do you need? As you write about the two games, be sure to describe some ways the games are similar to each other and some ways they are different.

**Principal for a Day (Persuasive)**

Your school is holding an essay contest that will allow the winner to be the principal for one day. Write a letter to the contest's judges explaining why you think you would make a good principal-for-a-day. Describe what you would do and why it would be beneficial to your school. Use specific reasons examples to support your argument.

**School Lunch Menu (Persuasive)**

Your school cafeteria always has the same lunch menu. You think it should have more choices. Write a letter to your principal asking for more variety on the menu. In your letter, include three reasons for changing the menu and some suggestions for what to add to it.

**School vs. Fun Reading (Compare & Contrast)**

Is the reading you do for school different from the reading you do for fun? If so, how? Write an essay comparing and contrasting school reading with fun reading. Your essay might compare what you read about, how you read, or even where you read. Use specific examples to show how these two types of reading are similar and how they are different.

**Special Treat (Descriptive)**

Think about a favorite food you look forward to eating at special occasions. Write an essay describing this food, including details about how it looks, smells, and tastes. Why is this food special to you?

**The Field Trip (Persuasive)**

Your teacher is trying to decide whether to take the class on a field trip to the zoo or to a local museum. Which would you rather do? Write an essay to persuade your teacher to agree with your choice. Give at least three reasons to support your choice.

**Your New Park (Descriptive)**

What if you could create a new park in the area where you live? Imagine the park you would want to create. Describe its size, trees, and plants. Describe the equipment you want in your park. Does it have a pond or a hill? Is there a zoo? Write an essay telling how your park would look and what features it would include.

## 6th Grade

### Alien Encounter (Narrative)

Imagine you're walking home when a spaceship carrying three teenagers from another planet lands in front of you. The aliens have come to learn about life on Earth, and they want you to be their guide! What happens next? Use your imagination to finish the story.

### Baby Elephant (Narrative)

Imagine that you wake up one morning to find a baby elephant standing in your kitchen. Write a story explaining how the baby elephant got in your kitchen. What happened to it after you found it? Be sure to include details to help the reader create a mental picture of the story.

### Beautiful Place (Descriptive)

There are many fascinating places in the world. We see pictures of them in books and on television. Think about the most beautiful place that you have ever seen in person. Write an essay describing this wonderful place in detail. What makes this place so beautiful?

### Books vs. Movies (Compare and Contrast)

Books and movies are both used to tell stories. Write an essay comparing books to movies. How are the two methods of telling stories alike? How are they different? Remember to include examples to support your points.

### Cafeteria Foods (Persuasive)

You eat lunch in your school cafeteria almost every day. The food is good, but you wish your favorite food was on the menu. Write a persuasive letter to the school's cafeteria telling them about your favorite food and convincing them to put it on the menu. Be sure to use specific reasons and examples to explain why this particular food belongs on the menu.

### Desert Island (Narrative)

Write a short story that begins with you sitting in your classroom and ends with you on an island trying to get back home. How did you get there? What does the island look like? Is anyone else on the island with you? How do you spend your time there and how do you get home?

### E-mails vs. Letters (Compare & Contrast)

Emails and letters are similar forms of communication, yet they have some important differences. Write an essay comparing and contrasting e-mails and old-fashioned letters. Are there specific times when you use one or the other, or are the two interchangeable? Do you write letters to the same people that you e-mail? How do the rules for writing letters differ from the rules for writing e-mails? Use specific examples from your experience to support your comparison.

### Finish the Story (Narrative)

You are on a ship coming to America. Suddenly some people board your ship. You don't know what to do! Yet these people don't seem dangerous. They are looking for something very, very strange. What do the people want? What happens? Finish the story. Be creative!

### First Day of School (Process)

Getting ready for the first day of school each year can take a lot of work! You need to think about getting ready for the first day. Describe everything you should do to prepare for this important day.

### Free Trip (Persuasive)

Your family has won a free three-day trip to any city in the United States. Write a letter to your family members explaining what city you think you should visit and why. Include specific reasons and examples to support your position.

### Lesson Learned (Narrative)

Many stories center on an important lesson that a character learns, such as "Honesty is the best policy." Write a story about a character who learns about honesty. Be sure to include all the events that help your character learn about the importance of honesty.

### **Movie Party (Persuasive)**

Your teacher asks you and three other students each to suggest a movie for the class to watch on the last day of school. The class will vote on which one of the four suggested movies they would like to watch. Write a short speech stating your movie choice and explaining to your classmates why they should vote for it.

### **No Names, Please (Cause & Effect)**

All of the world's proper nouns are on vacation for a week. That means no one can use the names of particular people, cities, states, streets, television shows, etc. for an entire week! Write an essay describing how the lack of proper nouns affects school work and social life.

### **Perfect Sandwich (Process)**

Almost everybody eats a sandwich from time to time. We all have our favorites. Some people like peanut butter and jelly. Some like fancy combinations with three types of cheese, two types of meat, and special spreads. Getting the sandwich to come out exactly right can be a tricky process. Explain, step by step, how to make your perfect sandwich.

### **Person to Remember (Descriptive)**

Write an essay describing a family member or friend who is special or unforgettable. Use description and examples to explain why you think this person is different from other people.

### **Rain Forest (Cause-Effect)**

Many people are concerned about the destruction of the Rain Forest in South America. Write an essay describing why you think the Rain Forest could be in danger. Then explain how the destruction of the Rain Forest could have negative consequences.

### **Reporting Music (Descriptive)**

Imagine that your school newspaper has asked you to write an article about a musical performance. You can write about a school concert, your friend's violin recital, or even a performance you've seen (and heard) on television or the Internet. Write a report describing the musical performance in detail. Use all five senses so that your readers imagine the performance for themselves.

### **School in Summer (Persuasive)**

Suppose your school is thinking about making the school year last from September to the middle of August. Some people think students should go to school during the summer. Other people think that a long summer break is important for students. What do you think? Write a letter to your teacher on whether students should go to school during the summer. Include three reasons why this is or is not a good idea.

### **Someone Like Me (Compare & Contrast)**

Often, characters from books, films or television shows remind us of ourselves. Choose a character that reminds you of yourself and write an essay in which you compare and contrast yourself with this character. How are you similar? How are you different? What choices does the character make that you might not make? What choices can you see yourself making? What things does the character say that you agree with? What do you disagree with? In your essay, give your reader lots of information about yourself and the chosen character.

### **Special Person (Descriptive)**

Think about a very special person in your life. For example, it may be a parent, a friend, or a teacher. Describe this person, including the person's appearance and personality. Also include why this person is important to you.

### **Transportation Trouble (Cause & Effect)**

Think about the important role that cars and trucks play in our everyday lives. How would life change if you woke up tomorrow morning and all the cars and trucks in the world had disappeared? Write an essay describing how your life and your world would change if cars and trucks suddenly disappeared. Be sure to use specific details and examples to explain the changes this would cause.

### **Trashbot (Process)**

Imagine that your parents have just bought a robot to help with various chores around the house. They have asked you to teach the robot how to collect trash and empty the trash can when it is full. Write an essay describing the process the robot would use to pick up and take out the trash. Be sure to include steps that might seem obvious to humans (such as opening and closing doors).

### **World's Fair (Persuasive)**

Your hometown is on the short list of possible locations for the next World's Fair. Write an essay for the World's Fair officials persuading them to choose your hometown. List at least three reasons why your hometown should be picked to host the next World's Fair.

### **You're the Expert (Process)**

Although you are probably not qualified to drive a car or teach algebra, you might be an expert at something else. Are you a video game whiz? Can you do magic tricks? Write an essay that identifies your area of expertise and describes the process someone would need to follow to master your skill.

### **Younger Student (Compare-Contrast)**

As we grow up, we change in some ways. Yet part of us always stays the same. Describe what you were like as a younger student and how you are now. Include three ways you are the same and three ways you are different.

### **Your Choice for President (Persuasive)**

Imagine that instead of holding an election to decide who would be the next President of the United States, it was up to you to choose someone for the job. The only problem is you have to convince the person you choose to give up whatever it is he or she is currently doing and be president instead. Not everyone wants to be president. Think of someone you know who would be a good president – maybe one of your parents, or your teacher, or some other person you respect a lot. Then write them a letter convincing them to accept the job of president of the United States.

## **7th Grade**

### **A Fork in the Road (Narrative)**

The expression "a fork in the road" refers to a circumstance where a person must choose one of two directions without knowing what waits for them on each road. This metaphor can be applied to many life decisions where we have to choose between two courses of action, not knowing which will work out better in the end. Write a story about a character who is struggling with a decision. Why is the decision hard to make? Your story should reveal the choice the character makes and the consequences of that choice.

### **A Hot Day (Descriptive)**

Imagine that it is a very hot summer day, and you need to find a way to cool off. Write an essay describing what the day feels like and how you cool yourself off. Use vivid details and descriptive words to describe the day, how the heat makes you feel, and how you finally cool down.

### **About You (Compare-Contrast)**

People sometimes act one way around their family and another way around their friends. As a result, our family and friends may have very different ideas of what we are like. Write an essay comparing and contrasting what your family and your friends think you are like. Include several ways that their views are similar and several ways that they are different. Give specific examples to support your points.

### **After-School Animals (Persuasive)**

Your local animal shelter is looking for responsible volunteers to work with stray dogs, to work with stray cats, or to work in the shelter's office. In order to help them choose the best volunteers for each job, the shelter staff has asked each applicant to write an essay offering specific reasons and examples why he or she should be chosen for the job.

### **Brush 'Em Up! (Process)**

Your teacher has asked you to create an instruction manual for 2nd graders that explains the correct way to brush your teeth. You do not need to explain what a toothbrush is or why it's important to brush; concentrate instead on the actions involved in brushing. Think about the process of brushing your teeth. Do you brush your top teeth and bottom teeth separately or at the same time? Do you brush from right to left? How much time do you devote to each tooth? Write a set of instructions, based on your own personal method, which explains to a 2nd grade student the entire process of tooth brushing.

### **Changing Schools (Process)**

Going from elementary school to junior high/middle school is a big change. Sometimes these changes can be difficult. You have a younger friend who is getting ready to go to junior high/middle school and could use your help. Explain to your friend several things that he or she can do to get ready for the change. Give examples from your own experiences to support your suggestions.

### **Different Country (Narrative)**

Pretend that one morning you wake up and find yourself in a different country. Describe what happened. How did you get to the foreign country? Where are you? What do you do? Do you learn anything? Write a short story about your day in a different country. Use your imagination.

### **Favorite Exercise (Persuasive)**

Think about your favorite way to exercise. For example, you may enjoy dancing, performing martial arts, or playing a sport. Write an essay explaining why you think your favorite form of exercise is a great way to stay in shape, and why other people should try it. Give several reasons and examples.

### **Favorite Season (Descriptive)**

Think of your favorite season of the year. Write an essay describing what this season is like so that the reader has a vivid picture of the season. Use all of your senses. Think about how this season affects the sights, smells, tastes, and sounds around you.

### **Guest Speaker (Persuasive)**

Think of a guest speaker that you would like to invite to your school. For example, it may be a famous author, politician, or sports star. Write an essay on why you think that this person should be invited to talk. Give several reasons and convincing examples.

### **Help for a New Student (Process)**

You see a new student who has just transferred to your school. How will you help the student get acquainted with your school? Write an essay that provides several suggestions to help the new student deal with common situations at your school. Give examples from your own experiences to support your suggestions.

### **Hobby Recommendation (Persuasive)**

Your friend is thinking about taking up a new hobby but is unsure about what hobby to pursue. What kind of hobby would you recommend to your friend? Write an essay about why your friend should get involved in the hobby you recommend. Give several reasons and examples.

### **Inspiration (Cause & Effect)**

Sometimes other people inspire us to act or think a certain way. Write an essay about a time when you were inspired or motivated by something someone did or said. What were the words or actions that motivated you? What effect did these words or actions have on you? Were the effects positive or negative? Use specific details to illustrate your inspiration.

### **It Can't Be (Descriptive)**

It is the year 2025, and you are traveling to the moon. As you step off of the space ship, you let out a gasp as you survey the scene. What do you see? What does it feel like? Write an essay describing your trip to the moon. Use specific details so that your friends back on Earth can understand what you experienced.

### **Most/Least Favorite Music (Compare & Contrast)**

Many people have a favorite kind of music: rock, country, jazz, hip-hop, rap, classical, or some other type of music. Many people also have a least favorite kind of music. What kind of music do you like best? What kind do you like least? Explain how your favorite and least favorite kinds of music are different from each other and what they still have in common with each other. You might want to discuss such features as the beat, the words of the songs, the musicians who perform the music, the social impact of the music, or how the music makes you feel.

### **Musical Freedom (Persuasive)**

Music is one of the things that most kids can decide about by themselves. They can decide what kind of music they like and how they want to listen to it. Some CDs, however, are rated, and not everyone is allowed to buy them. Some people think that kids under a certain age should not be allowed to listen to certain types of music and lyrics. What do you think? Do you think you should be allowed to listen to and buy any CD you want, or should there be restrictions? Write a letter for your school newspaper's editorial section stating your argument as strongly as possible. Use examples to support your points.

### **One Book (Persuasive)**

Your school is in the process of choosing a book to use in its new "One School, One Book" reading program. The book that is chosen will be read and discussed by everyone who attends or works at the school. Write an essay nominating your book choice. Without just describing the book's content or plot, offer reasons why this book is a good choice for your school.

### **Opposite Salaries (Cause and Effect)**

Successful entertainers and professional athletes can earn fortunes, but teachers have more moderate incomes. What if teachers earned huge salaries and successful entertainers and athletes earned only average salaries? Describe how the field of education and the entertainment industry would be different from the way they are now.

### **Something Beautiful You Saw (Descriptive)**

Think about something beautiful that you saw recently. Write an essay describing what you saw and how you felt. Use all of your senses. Think about what it would look like, smell like, and feel like. Give lots of details so that the reader can share your impressions.

### **Trading Places (Narrative)**

Imagine that you and one of your ancestors are given the opportunity to trade places for a day. You are allowed to travel back into the year 1900. Where are you? What do you do? What do you learn that will affect how you live in the present? Write a story about your experience.

### **TV Advertisement (Cause-Effect)**

Think of an advertisement that you look forward to seeing on television. Explain why this advertisement is so memorable and fun to watch. Also explain whether or not this advertisement has influenced your behavior or your thoughts. Include examples to support your points.

### **TV School (Compare & Contrast)**

A lot of books, movies, and television shows take place, at least in part, in schools. Some of these fictional schools are more realistic than others. Write an essay comparing life at your real school to life in a fictional school. Use specific examples to demonstrate how the two schools are similar and how they are different.

### **Tying a Shoe (Process)**

You know how to tie your shoes, but can you explain the task to your five-year-old cousin? You can't be there to show her what to do; you can only explain with words. Do your best to explain the process of tying a shoe so that a five-year-old can understand it.

### **Weirdest Day Ever! (Narrative)**

Strange things happen to everyone from time to time. What if they all happened at once? Imagine you woke up this morning to find all sorts of weird things happening around you. Write a story about what you experience on the weirdest day ever. Be sure to include descriptive details.

### **You are the Teacher (Narrative)**

Pretend that one morning you wake up and find out that you've become your teacher for a day! What happened? What do you do? Do you learn anything? Write a story about what happens. Use your imagination!

### **Your Town (Descriptive)**

Think about the city or town where you live. Write an essay describing what life is like there. Use all of your senses. Describe what the place looks like, smells like, and sounds like. Provide enough detail so that the reader can share your impressions.

## **8th Grade**

### **Conserving Resources (Process)**

What can kids do to help conserve natural resources, such as trees, clean air, and energy? Write a how-to essay with several suggestions for conserving resources. Give detailed instructions and examples to support your ideas.

### **Designing a TV Show (Informative)**

A public television network is seeking ideas for a new series of shows that would be educational for teenagers. The series will include ten one-hour episodes and will be shown once a week. Some of the titles under consideration are: "Great Cities of the World" "Women in History" "Nature Walks" "American Legends" Choose one of these titles. Write a letter to the network president describing your ideas for a new educational series. In your letter, describe what one episode might be like. Use specific examples of what information you would include in the episode so the network president will be able to imagine what the series would be like.

### **Dog Sitting (Persuasive)**

Your neighbor is going out of town for several weeks and needs someone to take care of her dog. She is considering either hiring you or taking the dog to a kennel. Write an essay describing what you think your neighbor should do with her dog. Give several reasons and examples to support what you recommend.

### **Favorite Music (Descriptive)**

Imagine that you are listening to your favorite music. Write a descriptive essay about this music. Describe how it makes you feel. Also include what the music would be like if you could see it, touch it, smell it, or taste it. Use your imagination. Give lots of details so that the reader can share your impressions.

### **Footprints on the Beach (Narrative)**

You have probably read books or seen movies about people shipwrecked or lost by themselves on a deserted island. In the famous book, *Robinson Crusoe*, the main character is a castaway who thinks he is alone on an island. However, one day he is surprised to find a set of footprints on the beach. He knows the footprints aren't his. Imagine you are a lonely castaway on an island and that you notice someone else's footprints on the beach one day. What will you do? Tell the story of what happens after you find the footprints.

### **Graduate (Expository)**

Imagine that the Board of Education decides that students may earn a high school diploma after completing the eighth grade. Students will no longer have to attend ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades. What would you do next year? How will your life be different? Write an essay using specific details to describe what path your life would take after graduating from eighth grade.

### **I'm Bringing a Guest (Descriptive)**

You want to bring your best friend along for a trip to visit your relatives, but first they want to hear all about him/her. How would you describe your best friend to someone who has never met him/her? Write an essay describing your best friend in detail. You can talk about how your friend looks, talks, and dresses, but also try to describe the qualities that make the person such a good friend. Be as specific as possible, and provide enough details so your relatives could picture your best friend in their mind.

### **Impostor (Narrative)**

You wake up one day to find yourself living somebody else's life. Whose life are you living? What happened to your life? How does it feel? What do you do? Write a story about the experience of being someone else for a day. Use details so that your reader will understand your experience.

### **Lengthening the School Year (Persuasive)**

Many people think that students are not learning enough in school. They want to shorten most school vacations and make students spend more of the year in school. Other people think that lengthening the school year and shortening vacations is a bad idea because students use their vacations to learn important things outside of school. What is your opinion? Write a letter to your school board either in favor of or against lengthening the school year. Give specific reasons to support your opinion that will convince the school board to agree with you.

### **Library Computers (Persuasive)**

The public library in your neighborhood has announced that it will no longer allow patrons under the age of sixteen to use its computers. The announcement argues that children under the age of sixteen rarely need computers for research and are more likely to damage or misuse the computers. Write a letter to the head of the library in which you argue against this new policy. Use specific reasons and examples to support your position.

### **Literary Character (Compare & Contrast)**

Have you ever read a book that included a character that reminded you of yourself? Perhaps the character had the same type of family as yours, was the same age as you or played the same sport as you. Maybe the character had a personality similar to yours. Select a fictional character that is similar to you in some way. Write an essay comparing and contrasting the character with yourself. Use specific examples in your essay to illustrate the similarities and differences.

### **Mind-Readers Everywhere! (Cause & Effect)**

Imagine that everyone on earth is suddenly granted the ability to read minds. It is no longer necessary to speak in order to communicate, and it is no longer possible to lie to another person. What effects would this change have on our world? You may want to concentrate on a specific aspect such as social interactions or political campaigns. Write an essay describing some of the changes you would expect to see. Be sure to include both good and bad changes.

**Night Owl (Persuasive)**

Now that you are in the eighth grade, you think your bedtime should be moved back by one hour. Your parents aren't sure that this is a good idea, but they are willing to consider your argument. Write an essay that explains your reasons for wanting a later bedtime. As you make your argument, be sure to address any objections your parents are likely to make about your proposal.

**No School (Expository)**

Imagine living in a society where kids do not have to attend school. Instead, they are expected to teach themselves. Write an essay comparing and contrasting teaching yourself with attending school. Explain how you would teach yourself. What resources would you use? Describe several ways your life would be different if you did not have to attend school and several ways it would stay the same. Give specific examples.

**Pen Pal (Descriptive)**

Imagine that you have a pen pal from another country. In a recent letter your pen pal asks about your school. Write a descriptive essay explaining how your school looks, sounds, and smells. Also describe how your school makes you feel. Provide enough details so that your pen pal can share your impressions of your school.

**Pioneer on Mars (Persuasive)**

It has just been discovered that Mars is a planet that can sustain life. The government is choosing people to go there and establish a colony. You want to be chosen to spend a year there as a pioneer. Write an essay persuading the government to choose you as one of the first inhabitants of Mars. Clearly describe how choosing you would benefit the project.

**River Swimming (Narrative)**

While swimming in a river something shiny near the bottom catches your eye. You dive down to get a closer look. What is it? Why is it there? What will you do with it? Write a story describing what you find. Be creative!

**Scavenger Hunt (Process)**

Suppose that one of your friends has asked you to help organize a scavenger hunt for a younger sibling's birthday party. Write an essay in which you outline the exact process of setting up a scavenger hunt. What would you hide? Where would you hide it? What kind of instructions and clues would you leave for the participants? Be very detailed and include all the steps.

**School Club (Expository)**

You are a member of a school club, and the members want to take a field trip. The problem is that the club does not have sufficient funds. What can you and the other members do to raise money for the trip? Write an essay detailing several suggestions for fund-raising. Give specifics to show how these suggestions would work.

**Space Adventure (Narrative)**

You are an astronaut who has been sent on a secret mission by the President. You are to determine if any intelligent life exists on a planet in a galaxy far away. What happens on your trip? Do any problems arise? What do you find out? Write a story about your adventure. Be creative!

**Space Visitor (Narrative)**

Imagine this situation! A noise outside awakens you one night. You look out the window and see a spaceship. The door of the spaceship opens, and out walks a space creature. What does the creature look like? What do you do? Write a story about what happens next.

**Students Working (Persuasive)**

Many students work part-time while going to school. For example, they may baby sit, have a paper route, mow lawns, or pet sit. Explain whether or not you think working while going to school is a good idea. Give several reasons and examples.

**Technology (Cause-Effect)**

Technology is everywhere. People use it at home, at work, and at school. What if technology were not as advanced as it is today? Using specific examples, write an essay describing how your life would be different.

**Teenager (Expository)**

Think about what it is like being a teenager. How is being a teenager different from being a young child? Write an essay comparing and contrasting life as a teenager and life as a young child. Make sure you include several ways that the two stages in life are similar and several ways that they are different. Give examples from your own experiences to support your points.

**That's My Slingfrapper! (Descriptive)**

You are almost ready to reveal your brilliant new invention, the slingfrapper, to the world. But first, you need to apply for a patent. Write an essay for your patent application describing the slingfrapper in detail. What does it look like? What does it do? What makes it unique?

**TV Characters (Compare-Contrast)**

Think about your favorite television shows that feature teenage characters. How realistic are these characters? Write an essay comparing and contrasting television portrayals of teenagers with real life. Make sure you include several ways they are similar and several ways they are different. Give examples from specific shows to support your points.

**Winter Tourism (Persuasive)**

The civic and business leaders of your hometown want to increase the number of tourists who visit there. These leaders have decided that they will advertise winter as one of the best times for tourists to come. Write an essay in which you explain whether you agree or disagree that winter is a good time to visit your hometown. Give several reasons and examples to support your viewpoint.

**Yearbook (Persuasive)**

The principal says that school yearbooks are too expensive and not enough students buy them. Therefore, your school may not publish a yearbook this year. Write an essay explaining whether or not you think your school should publish a yearbook. Give several reasons to support your position.

**Your Own Superhero (Descriptive)**

There are dozens of superheroes in comic strips and in movies. Some can fly, some can run faster than humans, and some have enormous strength. Imagine a new, original superhero. How could this superhero be described? What special powers would he or she have, and where did the superhero get those powers? How would he or she look? Does your superhero have a special hideout and equipment? And, of course, don't forget to describe your superhero's costume!

## 9th grade

### **Class Outside (Persuasive)**

Spring has finally arrived and the weather has been beautiful all week. Sitting in the classroom with the windows closed is driving you and your classmates crazy. Wouldn't it be nice to do your learning outside for a change? Write an essay convincing one of your teachers to hold class outside for a day. Imagine what her objections might be, and be ready with counterarguments.

### **Day with a Friend (Expository)**

Imagine that a good friend is visiting you for a day. Write an essay explaining how the two of you might best spend the day together.

### **Directions for a Meal (Expository)**

Write an essay in which you provide readers with step-by-step instructions on how to prepare your favorite meal. Explain the ingredients you will need and the order in which they are added to the recipe or meal. Include details such as the smells, taste, and appearance of the finished meal.

### **Exercise for Teenagers (Expository)**

Exercise is important for teenagers, but sometimes it is hard to get started. Write an essay suggesting ways that teenagers can exercise more. Include specific ideas or approaches that would appeal to teenagers.

### **Favorite Commercial (Descriptive)**

Do you have a favorite commercial? What is it for? What do you like about it? Write an essay describing your favorite commercial in detail. Be sure to include details that will help your readers to understand descriptions not only what the commercial looks and sounds like, but also how the commercial made you feel and why you like it.

### **Favorite Possession (Descriptive)**

Describe your favorite possession. Write an essay about your favorite thing, describing it so that a reader can appreciate its value to you. Illustrate what it looks and feels like and discuss why it is so important to you.

### **Fictional Bedroom (Descriptive)**

We hear a lot about Harry Potter's bedroom, but in general, books and movies don't go into much detail about where their characters sleep. Write an essay describing the bedroom of a favorite fictional character. How large is the room? How is it furnished? Is it messy or clean? What is on the walls? As you describe the details of the room, be sure to explain why you imagine the character's room the way you do.

### **Field Trips (Persuasive)**

There is some debate about the benefits of field trips. Some educators argue that they are valuable educational tools, while others claim that they are no more than a chance for students to have a free day. Write an essay in which you argue whether field trips are beneficial or a waste of time. Support your position with specific reasons and examples, citing your own experience or the experiences of your peers and class to bolster your opinion.

### **Forever Young? (Expository)**

Peter Pan is the story of a boy who doesn't want to grow up. If you could pick any age to be forever, which age would it be? You can pick an age you have not yet been. Why would you pick that age? Be sure to use examples and details when writing your essay explaining which age you would choose to be and why.

### **Get a Job (Persuasive)**

The U.S. Department of Labor says that 14- and 15-year-olds may work in family businesses, stores, restaurants, theaters, and sports arenas. Think of one more place that you believe 14- and 15-year-olds should be able to work. Write an essay to the U.S. Department of Labor to convince officials to expand the regulations to allow for this new place of employment. Be sure to give several reasons to support your argument.

### **Good Person (Descriptive)**

Describe a "good person." Write an essay in which you illustrate what it means to be a "good person", either by identifying and explaining the qualities it takes to be a good person or by identifying someone you know who is one.

### **How Did You Two Meet? (Narrative)**

You meet friends in many different places and situations. Sometimes you make a great friend in a very unlikely way. Write an essay telling the story of how you and a close friend met. Use specific details to describe where you met and how you became good friends.

### **Keep Our Town Clean (Persuasive)**

You have been noticing that the amount of litter in your town has been increasing. Everywhere you go, you can see cans, bottles, plastic bags, and other trash littering the streets. Write a letter to your local newspaper urging members of your community to help keep your town clean. Use specific reasons and examples to convince your audience to work toward a cleaner town.

### **Litter in the Park (Persuasive)**

A park in your town or neighborhood has become messy with litter. You have decided to start an organization dedicated to cleaning up the park. Write an essay persuading people to join your organization. Why is your organization necessary? Why should others contribute? Give people compelling reasons to help.

### **Lost and Found (Narrative)**

The Lord of the Rings is the story of a very powerful object, lost for hundreds of years, that is found and guarded by a memorable group of characters. Write a story about an object that, during the course of your story, is lost and then found. The object could be something small and personal that holds meaning only to one person, or it could be something huge and historically significant. Let your imagination run wild!

### **Lunchroom (Descriptive)**

Write an essay in which you describe your school lunchroom to someone who has never seen it. Include sights, sounds, smell, and tastes so that your reader can imagine what it would be like to eat there. Identify the sensory experience you like best about the lunchroom, as well as what you like least.

### **Make-up Day (Persuasive)**

Imagine that your school had to close for several bad-weather days during the winter. Now the students have to make up eight hours of class time before the end of the school year. Some students want to make up all of the time on one Saturday; others want to make up the time by staying one extra hour on eight school days. The student body will vote to decide. Write an essay to your classmates explaining which option you think is the best and why you think they should vote for it.

### **New Challenges (Narrative)**

Learning new things can be difficult, but it can be rewarding too. Think about a skill you have that wasn't easy to learn – it could be anything from juggling, to dribbling a basketball, to playing a musical instrument. Tell the story of the learning process you went through to develop the new skill, the challenges you faced, and how you felt when you finally mastered the skill.

### **New School (Narrative)**

Over the course of their education, most students experience a "new school" at one time or another. This could occur when a student moves to a different town or state or when he/she moves from grade school to middle school or middle school to high school. Write an essay about your first day at a new school. Use specific details in telling the story of any challenges you had to overcome or any surprises you may have discovered.

### **Sister School (Persuasive)**

Sister School programs link your high school with a high school in another country. Usually, sister schools host exchange students; sometimes, they also arrange for pen pals between schools or exchange culturally-significant gifts. In addition, both schools offer programs to learn about life in the sister country. Pick a city in another country, and write an essay to your student council proposing that your school become a 'sister' to a high school in that city. Be sure to give reasons why you feel this program would be beneficial to the students at your school.

### **Sound Picture (Descriptive)**

When you describe a place to someone who has never been there, you should tell the person what the place looks like. Picture yourself in a unique place you know well. Instead of describing how the place looks, write an essay describing the sounds you hear there. Try to give the reader a complete "sound picture" of the place you are describing.

### **Special Skills (Expository)**

Everyone has certain skills in which they excel. What is one area in which you excel? Write an essay describing your success and how you achieved it. Be complete and specific in describing how you achieved this success.

### **Story Contest (Narrative)**

Imagine that a film director is holding a contest for the best story written by a high school student about his or her high school experience. The winning story will be made into a movie to be filmed at the winner's school. Write a story about high school that takes place in your school and that would make a great movie. Use as many vivid details as possible so that the director will pick your story.

### **Teen-Owned Businesses (Expository)**

You receive a letter from a local bank, which has developed a new program for teenagers. This innovative program will provide teens with the start-up money for businesses. As part of the application process, you must provide the bank with an essay in which you describe your business idea. What type of business would you start? Would you provide a service or a product? Where would you open your business (downtown, the suburbs, a mall, rural area, etc.) and why? Write an essay describing your business idea and explain why you chose it.

### **That's Dedication (Expository)**

Your school is creating an annual award for the student who demonstrates the most dedication to a worthy task or cause. The school wants to name the award after someone whose dedication made the world a better place. Write an essay describing the person who best embodies dedication.

### **Two Classes (Expository)**

Write an essay in which you compare and contrast two of your classes. Discuss at least 2 differences and 2 similarities between the classes. Be as specific and comprehensive as possible in comparing and contrasting the two classes.

## **10th Grade**

### **Activities Outside School (Expository)**

Most students participate in one or more extracurricular activities outside of school. In fact, many colleges consider applicants' non-academic activities when making admissions decisions. Write an essay discussing the value of extracurricular activities such as sports, clubs, and orchestras. What do students gain by participating in these activities?

### **Animal Shelter (Persuasive)**

Your community's animal shelter is running dangerously low on food and other supplies they need to take care of its animals. As a volunteer at the shelter, you are very worried about what will happen to the animals if the shelter runs out of supplies. Write a letter to your local newspaper persuading members of the community to support the shelter. Explain why you think the shelter is a worthy cause and use specific reasons and examples to support your position.

### **Art and Music (Persuasive)**

Many schools across the country lose their art or music classes due to budget cuts. Now the art and music programs at your school are at risk. The school board will vote next week. Write a persuasive letter to the school board stating your views about whether the art and music programs should be saved or eliminated. Make sure to support your opinion with persuasive arguments.

### **Babysitting (Persuasive)**

You have agreed to baby-sit this weekend for a third-grader in your neighborhood. Knowing that the child likes to test authority, plan your approach for persuading him to eat his dinner, brush his teeth, and go to bed without a fight. Write an essay in which you anticipate his arguments and develop strategies for countering them.

### **Career (Descriptive)**

Write an essay about the career that you plan to pursue when you are an adult. Include information such as the preparation or training that you would need to achieve this career, and how it will affect your life and the lives of those around you. Explain the responsibilities of your work and why this career is the ideal one for you.

### **Celebrity Role Models (Persuasive)**

Many people look up to celebrities as role models and imitate their styles, interests, and attitudes. Admirers believe that celebrities' success gives other people permission to act in the same way, even when these decisions and actions are frivolous or dangerous. Write an essay arguing whether or not celebrities are appropriate role models for young people. Identify the qualities or attributes of a role model, and analyze whether popular celebrities have these traits. Support your position with reasons and examples.

### **Extracurricular Activities (Persuasive)**

It is often suggested that the best way for a school district to save money is to eliminate certain extracurricular activities by either reducing the number of varsity sports available to students or getting rid of certain student clubs. It is said that although these activities may be enjoyable to the students, they are not necessarily vital to the educational experience. What do you think? Are these activities an important part of the student experience or are they just an unnecessary privilege? Write an essay in which you argue whether extracurricular activities are necessary or unnecessary. Cite specific reasons or examples for your choice.

### **Favorite Movie (Descriptive)**

You have been asked to write a review of your favorite movie for an online magazine. Write an essay describing what makes your favorite movie so enjoyable. Your review might include discussions of the quality of the acting in the movie, the movie's story, characters, setting, genre, etc., but remember that a good movie review will characterize and evaluate a movie without giving away the whole plot.

### **Harmless Entertainment? (Persuasive)**

Some parents and community leaders argue that violent television shows, movies, and video games encourage violent behavior. Fans contend that these shows and games are only entertainment and do not influence viewers' behavior. With which view do you agree? Write an essay supporting your position. Explain the reasons why you believe it is the right side. Use examples to strengthen your argument.

### **Inspiring Teacher (Expository)**

By the time you reach high school, you will have had at least eleven different teachers. It has been said that a great teacher can inspire greatness in his or her students. Have you had a teacher who has inspired you to do your best? Write an essay about the effect this teacher had on your life, beliefs, or goals. Be sure to include specific details and examples to explain your points fully.

### **Leadership (Expository)**

A leader is defined as a person who directs, commands or guides a group or activity. Think about someone you know who has proven to be a great leader, either in leading a country or team or organization. Write an essay about this leader, explaining the characteristics they have which would encourage people to follow them. Be as specific as possible in illustrating the attributes that this leader has exhibited which would lead others to respect, admire and follow them.

### **Living Art (Narrative)**

Imagine that you standing in an art museum gazing at a particularly interesting painting. You take a step closer to get a better look. All of a sudden you realize that you have stepped into the painting. Write an essay describing your journey inside a painting. What particular painting or kind of painting are you in? What do you see there? Use specific details to explain what you see and experience.

### **Loyalty (Expository)**

Loyalty is an important quality in a friend. Write an essay about a friend who has shown loyalty to you. Explain why you consider loyalty to be important. Describe the circumstances that led your friend to show loyalty and how your friend's loyalty made you feel.

### **Message in a Bottle (Narrative)**

Throughout the years, many sailors and beachgoers have placed messages in sealed bottles and dropped the bottles into the ocean where they eventually washed up on foreign shores. Occasionally the finder has even contacted the sender. Write a story about finding your own message in a bottle. Remember to include details about what the message says, where it was sent from, and who the sender turns out to be.

### **Pitch Session (Narrative)**

In Hollywood, screen writers sometimes pitch their idea to producers by saying, "It's like Movie A meets Movie B." This means the idea combines elements of two well-known movies into an entirely new movie. Imagine blending two of your favorite movies by combining parts from each movie. Write a brief version of the story that would emerge.

### **Private Island (Descriptive)**

Imagine that you have been shipwrecked in the middle of the ocean. You drift in a rowboat for a day, until you eventually wash up on the shore of a small tropical island. There appear to be no other humans on the island. The island offers plenty of fruits and nuts to consume as well as fresh water. Write an essay in which you describe your private island in detail, using all your senses to paint a vivid picture of the place. In addition to describing the sights, help the reader experience the distinctive smells and sounds of the island.

### **Proudest Moment (Narrative)**

There are moments in everyone's lives when they feel pride and accomplishment after completing a challenging task. These moments can happen in the classroom, on the field, or in their personal lives. Write a story about one of your proudest moments. Describe the circumstances around the event, and the struggles you had to overcome. Include why that moment was your proudest, and how it affected your life.

### **Shapes and Textures (Descriptive)**

Write an essay describing the shapes and textures of several objects you touch every day. What are the similarities and differences in how these objects look and feel? What emotions do they evoke?

### **Sounds (Expository)**

What sounds make you smile? What sounds make you frown? Describe your favorite sounds, including how they make you feel and any sights, smells, or sensations you associate with them. Include plenty of detail so your readers can share your pleasure or displeasure with these particular sounds.

### **Teaching Styles (Expository)**

All instructors are different. Write an essay comparing and contrasting the teaching styles of two of your teachers. In your essay, compare and contrast the differing philosophies between your teachers, explaining which one you enjoy more and which one you find most helpful. Be as specific as possible in discussing your teachers and their philosophies.

### **Teamwork (Expository)**

The ability to cooperate with others to accomplish a task is an important skill. Think of a time when you had to use teamwork to complete a task or project. Who did you work with? What aspects of the project went smoothly and what aspects were more difficult? Write an essay identifying the task your team set out to accomplish and describing your experiences working as a part of a team.

### **The Antique Trunk (Narrative)**

One rainy day while exploring the back rooms of a secondhand store, you come across a dusty wooden trunk containing: 1) a fan with a scene from a Japanese love story painted on it, and 2) a photograph of a barn. To whom did these items belong? Create a story that tells where these items came from and how they ended up in the trunk.

### **Travel (Narrative)**

For many people, travel is a wonderful hobby. It offers the chance to go to distant cities or countries to discover new worlds. Those worlds can be as far away as the other side of the globe or as close as the other side of town. Write a story about a trip you have taken, describing in detail the sights and sounds of your journey from beginning to end.

### **Volunteer Work (Persuasive)**

In some high schools, students are expected to complete a certain number of hours of volunteer work before they can graduate. Those in favor of such plans say it encourages students to become involved in their communities and helps to foster a sense of commitment and responsibility in the students. Others, however, claim it places undue stress on students already overworked with school and extracurricular activities. Write an essay in which you argue for or against community volunteer work as a requirement for high school graduation. Use specific reasons and examples for your choice.

### **Weird Food (Descriptive)**

Describe the most unusual food you have ever eaten. What did it look like on your plate? How did it smell? How did it feel in your mouth? What did it taste like? Write an essay describing your unusual dining experience.

### **Your School (Descriptive)**

Describe your school. Write an essay in which you illustrate what your school is like, including its sights and sounds, the neighborhood or environment it is in, and anything about it that makes your school unique. Write the essay so that a reader who knows nothing about your school will be able to "see" it in their mind.

## **11th Grade / College Prep**

### **A New Fable (Narrative)**

The fable is a familiar type of story in which one or both of the lead characters is often an animal and the action illustrates a life lesson summed up as a moral. Write a fable that illustrates the moral, "Never say anything you wouldn't want everyone to hear." Be sure to show how the main character learns the lesson through the action of the story.

**After-School Jobs (Persuasive)**

Many students now take after-school jobs that involve working long hours. Some administrators argue that these jobs are tiring for students and make it difficult for them to complete their schoolwork. Others say that paying jobs are good experience for the future. Write an essay arguing your point of view about whether or not after-school jobs are beneficial for students. Use specific examples and reasons to support your position.

**Body Language (Descriptive)**

The body language of a person — movements, posture, facial expressions — can provide all sorts of information about that person's mood, attitude, and personality. Think of a character from a television show, or even someone you know, and write an essay in which you describe that person's body language. Be sure to indicate what information the body language conveys about the person and to include specific examples of how body language reflects the person's personality.

**Clean Your Family Room! (Expository)**

Cleaning the room where your family spends most of its time is probably not the most enjoyable experience in your life, but chances are good that you've developed your own technique to make the process as painless as possible. Write an essay explaining how you clean the family room, step by step. Be sure to use transitions between steps to help the reader follow along.

**Club Advisor (Persuasive)**

You have decided to start a new club or interest group at your school and you want your favorite teacher to advise the club. Write a letter to your favorite teacher persuading him or her to advise the club. Be sure to explain what type of club it will be, why you think your teacher is the perfect advisor for the club, and what he or she will get out of the experience.

**Community-Service Class (Persuasive)**

In many high schools, students can participate in volunteer community-service programs that allow them to earn class credit while helping to improve their community. Imagine that your school is thinking of making "community service" a requirement for all students. Is requiring such a community-service course a good idea or a bad idea? Write an essay to convince other students that your view on this issue is correct. Be sure to include reasons and examples in your argument.

**Creating the Right Mood (Descriptive)**

Some novels and movies are particularly effective at creating distinctive moods or atmospheres. Write an essay describing a setting that creates a lonely, festive, or magical atmosphere. Use specific details to reinforce the mood you're trying to create.

**Day in the Life of a Door (Narrative)**

Think about the different doors you open and close several times a day. One of these doors may be the front door to your home, the passenger's door on your family car, or the double doors of the school cafeteria. Be creative and tell the story of a hard-working door from the door's point of view. What happens during its day? What does it expect? How does it feel about its job? How does it feel about the people it serves?

**Due Date (Persuasive)**

Your history teacher has just assigned a research paper and wants to know whether students would prefer a due date right before your school's two week winter recess or right after it. Some of your classmates would prefer to get the project done before the recess so that they can relax during their time off. Others would like to use the two week recess to complete the project. You and your classmates will take a vote to determine the due date. Write an essay making a case for your preferred due date. Offer specific reasons and examples to support your position and to address the opposing position.

**Fictional Character (Expository)**

Fictional characters from any genre (whether in books, movies, video games, etc.) often prove to be unforgettable. Write an essay about any fictional character that has had an effect on you. Fully describe the character, where you discovered him or her, and the effect he or she has had on you.

**Fictional Travel Guide (Expository)**

Have you ever wished that you could spend time in Narnia, Oz, or some other land you've read about in a book? Choose a fictional world or city that you'd like to visit and write an informational brochure in essay format for tourists traveling there. Your brochure should provide basic information that travelers will need during their visit and offer specific recommendations about things to do and places to see in this land.

### **Goals (Narrative)**

Think about the goals you have for your future. Write an essay about what you will do to reach your goals, whether that is to be a professional athlete, a famous scientist or a happy Mom or Dad. Tell the story of how you will achieve your goals, being as specific as possible in describing the obstacles and challenges you might face on the road to success.

### **Good Friend (Expository)**

What are the qualities of a good friend? Write an essay in which you describe what it takes to be a good friend. Identify the qualities a person must have to be a good friend, and develop those ideas with specific examples and support, citing your own experiences.

### **Guidelines (Persuasive)**

Many high schools have very strict rules about student participation in extra-curricular activities, insisting that students maintain a degree of academic success in order to participate in sports or clubs. In some cases, the students need to maintain a certain grade-point average to take part in extracurricular activities, while in other cases the students can just not have any failing grades in order to participate. Write an essay in which you argue whether or not any guidelines are necessary. Take a position and defend it with specific reasons and examples.

### **Life Imitates Art (Narrative)**

The notion of "life imitating art" is an old one. Think about an experience in which you felt as if you were living out a scene from a book, movie, or television show. Write a story relating your experience.

### **Luxury or Necessity (Expository)**

Cellular phones, home computers, and many other items that were once considered luxuries are now thought of by many people as necessities. Can a luxury become a necessity? Write an essay in which you discuss how to distinguish between the things we need and the things we want. Be sure to use specific examples to illustrate your points.

### **Military Service (Persuasive)**

In many countries, 18 year olds do not go directly from high school to college or the workplace but are instead required to spend a year in their country's military. Write an essay in which you argue for or against such a policy, using specific reasons and examples to support your position.

### **Movie Critic (Expository)**

Think of a movie that you enjoyed watching. What was it about the movie that you liked? Now think of a movie that you did not enjoy at all. Why didn't you enjoy it? Write an essay comparing and contrasting the two movies. Describe elements that the movies have in common as well as those elements that are different.

### **Mysterious Item (Descriptive)**

Think of an object that you have in your home. Without revealing what the item is, write an essay describing it in detail. How does the item look, sound, feel, and smell? Be specific enough that someone could walk into your house and identify the item based on your description.

### **News Hound (Narrative)**

You're a reporter, and you've just landed the biggest story of your career. What happened? What makes your story so important? Write the news story that will win you a Pulitzer Prize for journalism and make you a household name.

### **Perfect Place to Study (Descriptive)**

Create a mental picture of your ideal study environment. Do you prefer to study inside or outside? Do you prefer to study in a group or by yourself? With music or in silence? Describe your ideal study area in detail, and explain how each element contributes to your learning experience.

### **Raised Funds (Persuasive)**

Your class has made a new year's resolution to raise \$1,000 to improve your school. How do you think the money should be spent? Write an essay offering at least one suggestion for improving your school, and explain why you feel the money should be spent on this particular improvement.

### **Secret in the Old Library (Narrative)**

The local paper is sponsoring a story contest with a cash prize for the winner. The only guideline is that the story must be called "The Secret in the Old Library," and the story needs to explain the title. Exactly what is the secret? Why is it important? Write your own "The Secret in the Old Library" story for the newspaper contest. Remember to use descriptive details to illustrate the significance of the title.

### **Something Beautiful (Descriptive)**

What one person finds attractive is not necessarily going to be to everyone else's taste. Write an essay describing something that you think is beautiful. Be as specific as possible in describing it and why you think it's beautiful.

### **Where in the World? (Expository)**

Imagine that a radio station is sponsoring an essay contest for high-school students throughout the county. The prize is a round-trip ticket to anywhere in the world. Write an essay about the place you would most like to visit. Include the reasons why you would like to go there and what you think you would gain from the experience.

### **Your New Car (Descriptive)**

Pretend that you have been given the task of designing a new car to meet your particular needs and desires. Do you need a large trunk for your tuba? Does it need to be small to fit into tight parking spaces? Just say so. Write an essay describing your vehicle, including what it would look like, how it would run, and any special components or qualities that it would have.

## **12th Grade / College Prep**

### **A Pet's View (Descriptive)**

Imagine that you woke up this morning and discovered that you have been transformed into a dog, a cat, a fish, or some other kind of animal. How does the world seem different when viewed through the eyes of this animal? Write an essay using sensory details to describe the world from an animal's point of view.

### **Advice to Freshman (Expository)**

As a senior, you will soon be graduating from your high school. What advice would you give a freshman at your school to help them have happy, productive years in high school? Write an essay detailing the experiences and advice you feel would be helpful to someone beginning his or her high school years.

### **At First Glance (Narrative)**

"You can't judge a book by its cover" is a common saying. Another way of expressing this idea is, "Things are not always as they appear at first glance." Write an essay about an experience you've had that illustrates this theme.

### **Dress Code (Persuasive)**

Some high schools are requiring students to follow a dress code. Think about the reasons for instituting dress codes and why they might be needed or necessary. Write a letter to your principal stating your position for or against a dress code and support it with convincing reasons.

### **Educational Software (Descriptive)**

You have been contacted by a computer software company to come up with an idea for a computer game that is fun and teaches an important skill. Describe what kind of game you would design, including the skills that the game teaches. Include details about how the game would be played, what it would look like, and what players would learn along the way.

### **Electricity-Free (Narrative)**

You wake up one morning and find that you have no electricity in your house. There is a note under your door telling you that the electricity will be out all over town for three days. Tell the story of your three days without electricity. How does the lack of electricity change your routine? What do you do to adapt? How do you feel when the electricity finally comes back on?

### **Exchange Student (Expository)**

A high school exchange student from another country will be living with your family for three months and attending your school. The student has never been to the United States and is nervous about fitting in at a new school. Write a letter offering information that will help prepare your exchange student for three months at your home and school. Explain what day-to-day life is like for you and your friends and suggest what the student might need to pack for the trip.

### **Exit Exams (Persuasive)**

In some states, students are required to pass an exit exam before they can graduate from high school. If a student does not pass the exam, he/she cannot graduate. People in favor of this idea believe the exam simply asks the students to prove that they have gained the knowledge necessary to graduate from high school; people who are opposed, however, claim that such exams put too much emphasis on a single exam and don't take into consideration the student's four years of effort in the classroom. Write an essay in which you argue for or against the implementation of exit exams. Support your position with specific reasons and examples.

**Finding Your Way Home (Narrative)**

Compasses, maps, and GPS (global positioning system) are meant to help us find our destinations, but sometimes we find ourselves in unfamiliar territory. Write a story about a character who is lost in a large foreign city and struggles to find the way back home. Use specific details to describe your main character and his or her experiences during the journey through unfamiliar territory.

**Math Teams (Persuasive)**

Many high schools participate in "math meets," where teams of students compete to solve mathematical problems. However, these "math teams" are seldom recognized the way sports teams are. Write an essay arguing whether or not a member of a math team should be awarded a varsity letter for participating in math meets. Support your position with reasons and examples.

**Memorable School Day (Narrative)**

While some students may enjoy school more than others, all students have certainly had memorable days at school. Whether the day was positive (passing a test, a victory at the big game, a successful opening of a show) or negative (a friend moving away, a favorite teacher retiring), surely some day in every student's career stands out more than the others. Write a story about your most memorable day, including exactly what happened and why the day was so unforgettable for you. Be as specific as possible in relaying why this day was so important.

**Motivation (Expository)**

While many students persevere throughout high school, others occasionally become disinterested in what they claim is the "same old routine." What can be done to keep students motivated and keep them focused on their studies? Write an essay in which you describe how to keep things interesting in the classroom in order to keep students motivated.

**Movie Sequel (Narrative)**

While some well-loved films feature sequels, many do not. These movies can leave the audience wanting to know more about the plot and characters they've enjoyed. Is there a film you've wanted to continue past the ending? Write a synopsis of your own "sequel" to a beloved movie using the same characters and settings as the real film. Remember to include a summary of the previous title and plot, as well as specific new details to draw the reader into your continuation of the movie.

**Native President (Persuasive)**

Many young men and women dream of growing up to become President of the United States. However, only those who were born in this country are eligible to run for this office. Do you feel that the law should be changed to allow anyone to be president, regardless of where he or she was born? Write an essay arguing for or against this law. Be sure to cite specific reasons for your stance on this matter.

**On the Run (Persuasive)**

You are hoping to participate in a six-mile run to raise money for a good cause. In order to qualify for the event, you must find a group of sponsors willing to donate at least \$100 for each mile you complete. Write a letter to local businesses, neighbors, friends, and family persuading them to sponsor your run. Be sure to explain why the cause you're raising money for is worth supporting.

**Open-Campus Lunches (Persuasive)**

The issue of open-campus lunches is handled differently by most high schools around the country. Some schools allow all of their seniors to leave the school campus during the lunch hour, some schools do not allow any of their seniors to leave, while others allow only certain students (those with adequate grades and without disciplinary problems) to take advantage of the open-campus policy at lunch. Write an essay which argues for one of these positions, supporting your choice with specific reasons and examples.

**Plans After Graduation (Expository)**

All students are faced with the decision of what to do after high school graduation. Some students decide to enroll in college, while others go directly into the job market. Think about your plans beyond graduation. Write an essay identifying your choice and explaining why it is the best decision for you. Give reasons and examples to support your decision.

**Scent Memory (Descriptive)**

Gabriel Garcia Marquez's novel *Love in the Time of Cholera* begins with the arresting sentence, "It was inevitable: the scent of bitter almonds always reminded him of the fate of unrequited love..." Think about scents that evoke particularly strong memories for you. For example, does the smell of salty air remind you of a trip you once took to the beach? Think of a particular scent that conjures up a memory for you and write an essay in which you describe the scene associated with this scent. Try to engage as many of the reader's senses as possible and to be as specific as you can.

### **Sensory Snapshot (Descriptive)**

Imagine that you have a camera that can capture not only images, but also sounds, smells, and other sensations. Use this camera to take a "sensory snapshot" of some part of your daily routine. Write an essay describing the snapshot from your day in detail, using all your senses.

### **Skateboarding at School (Persuasive)**

Imagine that the principal of a nearby high school has forbidden the riding of skateboards on school grounds. He has cited damage to school property, noise pollution, and risk of injury as his main concerns. Some students argue that skateboards are a convenient mode of transportation; they are similar to bicycles, and therefore should not be forbidden. Imagine that your principal is considering the same rule at your school. Should skateboarding be banned or not? Write an essay explaining your position. Provide at least three reasons to support your position.

### **Special Object (Narrative)**

Read the following excerpt from a poem by Walt Whitman.

*There was a child who went forth every day,  
And the first object he look'd upon, that  
object he became,  
And that object became part of him for  
the day or a certain part of the day,  
Or for many years or stretching cycles of years.*

Whitman's poem suggests that certain objects become important to us and remain important to us even if we no longer have them. Write a story in which you tell about an object that remains important to the main character over a period of years. The main character could be you or someone you know. In your story, describe the main character's first encounter with the object, why the object is so important to the character, and how, over the years, it remains a part of the character's life.

### **Special Place (Descriptive)**

Most people have a special place where they are most comfortable. For some people this may be a room in their house or a quiet place in the woods, while others may find their peace in less obvious places: on a basketball court, playing an instrument, lost in the fantasy of a good book. Write an essay about your special place. What does it look like, sound like, feel like? Describe as completely as you can this special place so that the reader can appreciate it.

### **Student Leader (Expository)**

Given the many different personalities at a high school and the varying interests of the many students, what kind of a student makes a good leader? What are the qualities that help someone earn the respect of his or her peers? Write an essay in which you describe the qualities of a good student leader.

### **The Ever-Changing You (Expository)**

Picture yourself as you were four years ago. What were your interests and hobbies? Compare and contrast this younger version of yourself with your current self. Include at least three ways you have changed, and three ways you have remained the same.

### **The Meaning of Success (Expository)**

Write an essay explaining what success means to you. What goals would you have to meet before you consider yourself successful in life? What are the key ingredients required for leading a successful life?

### **The Quest (Narrative)**

A classic archetype in literature is the quest narrative in which the protagonist must undertake a difficult journey in order to obtain something or accomplish a particular deed. Write a brief story about a quest that takes place in your own world. Imagine that the hero must find a missing book and must overcome obstacles on the way. Why is the book important? What other characters want to prevent the hero from reaching it? Be sure to explain the significance of the book, why the hero needs it, challenges along the way, and what happens in the end.

### **Truth in Fiction (Expository)**

Sometimes, a fictional work is described as being "based on a true story." In some cases — as in historical fiction — the actual events described are real, though the characters are created by the writer. In other cases, the "true" story only resembles the facts in minor ways. Sometimes a writer will even call a story true, though it is entirely made up. How does the claim "based on a true story" affect your opinion of a story? Are you more or less likely to read a fictional story that is based on real events? Write an essay in which you explain your views on fact-based fiction.

### **Virtual Students (Persuasive)**

Thanks to the availability of home computers and increasingly powerful Internet access, some schools have the ability to transmit live classroom lectures via computer to students unable to attend class in person. Imagine that a school district is considering expanding its "virtual classroom" program to reduce overcrowding and save money on bus transportation for students in distant areas. However, some people argue that students who do not attend school in person will not develop the skills necessary to compete in the real world. Write an essay explaining your opinion about the expansion of virtual classroom learning. Provide reasons and examples to support your position.

### **Voter Registration Drive (Persuasive)**

Your school is sponsoring a voter registration drive for 18-year-old high school students. You and three of your friends are talking about the project. Your friends say the following: Friend 1: "I'm working on the young voters' registration drive. Are you going to come to it and register? You're all 18, so you can do it. We're trying to help increase the number of young people who vote and it shouldn't be too hard to read that the percentage of 18- to 20-year-olds who vote increased in recent years. We want that percentage to keep going up." Friend 2: "I'll be there. People should vote as soon as they turn 18. It's one of the responsibilities of living in a democracy." Friend 3: "I don't know if people should even bother to register. One vote in an election isn't going to change anything." Do you agree with friend 2 or 3? Write a response to your friends in which you explain whether you will or will not register to vote. Be sure to explain why and support your position with examples from your reading or experience. Try to convince the friend with whom you disagree that your position is the right one.

### **Wiki (Expository)**

Wikipedia is a collaborative online encyclopedia that is written and edited by its users. Anyone may contribute information about a given topic or edit information posted by other users. A city official has posted a short entry on the town that provides only basic information. In an effort to collect as much information as possible, the official is encouraging each resident to share his or her local knowledge by writing about an aspect of the town that is particularly familiar. Write a short essay to add to your town's Wikipedia entry. Be sure to choose a topic that you know a lot about.

### **Writing Mentor (Informative)**

Your school has a program in which a twelfth grader acts as a mentor for a tenth grader at the beginning of each school year. The mentor's job is to help the tenth grader have a successful experience at your school. The tenth grader you are working with is worried about being able to write well enough for high school classes. Write a letter to your tenth grader explaining what kind of writing is expected in high school classes and what the student can do to be a successful writer in high school. As you plan your response, think about your own writing experiences. How would you describe "good" writing? What advice about writing has been helpful to you? What writing techniques do you use?

## College Level Preparatory

### Changing Attitudes (Expository)

As we mature, our attitudes often change, and we learn to view things differently. Think about an important change in your attitude toward a person, a group of people, or a set of ideas, values or traditions. Write an essay in which you contrast your earlier attitude with the attitude you now hold. Explain why the change has taken place.

### Coping with Hostility (Expository)

Describe an experience in which you had to cope with resentment or hostility from others or one in which you expressed the same attitudes toward someone else. Explain how or why the situation developed and how you felt about it, reacted to it, or dealt with it.

### Different Worldviews (Expository)

Write an essay about someone you have met whose way of life or view of the world differs greatly from your own. Describe in detail how that person's lifestyle or view of the world differs from yours. Discuss what you have learned about yourself from having come in contact with that person.

### Difficult Undertaking (Expository)

We have all undertaken something, either voluntarily or by assignment, that we have later found too difficult to handle. Write an essay about a subject or task in your own life that you have discovered was too difficult for you. In your essay tell what you attempted and how you came to be involved in it. Describe what happened and explain why you were unable to see the effort through or why it was so difficult.

### Doing Things We Don't Enjoy (Expository)

Sometimes we choose to do things that we do not really enjoy — jogging, studying, eating the right foods, and so on. Describe something you do by choice that you really do not enjoy. Explain why you continue to do it. Discuss the changes that might occur in your life if you were to stop this activity.

### High-School Jobs (Expository)

Many students have jobs while they are still in high school. School administrators, parents and even teen-agers themselves debate the value of working while in high school. Discuss some arguments for and against high-school students working and explain your position. Support your views with examples from your own experience or that of people you know.

### Holidays (Expository)

We observe many different holidays. Think about a holiday or official celebration that you would like to see changed in some way or even eliminated altogether. Write an essay in which you propose that this holiday be either changed or eliminated. Give convincing reasons to support your argument.

### Insight Through Crisis (Expository)

People often gain insight into their own personalities from stressful situations such as going through a family crisis, taking a test in school, or being the only stranger in a group of people. Describe a stressful situation you have experienced and tell what it revealed to you about yourself. Explain how this revelation has changed your perception of yourself in some aspect of your life or activities.

### One Major Change (Expository)

At times we may think about what could have or would have been different in our lives if persons or events had been different. Suppose that you had the power to bring about one major change in your life. Tell what change you would have made and why you would have made it.

### Resisting a Popular Viewpoint (Expository)

Write an essay describing an occasion on which you privately or openly resisted a viewpoint that had become popular with your friends and acquaintances, or one on which you felt that actions taken by them were wrong. Describe the situation, explain why you disagreed with the group, and tell how you handled the situation.

# College Level I – General

## Acceptable Teen Behavior (Persuasive) [Writer's Sample Available](#)

In an effort to set guidelines for acceptable teenage behavior, parents and other adults in authority often make rules that restrict the freedoms of the individual. How much freedom and responsibility should teenagers have in making their own decisions? Explain your position by using evidence from your own experience or the experiences of other people.

## Adapting to New Technology (Persuasive)

New technology can solve problems, but it often creates new problems. The invention of the automobile, for example, created the need for speed limits, driver's licenses and traffic lights. Can you think of an invention that created problems when it was introduced? How were these problems solved? Explain your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

## Attendance Policy (Persuasive)

Is it acceptable for professors to base part of students' grades on attendance and class participation, or should grades be based entirely on students' performance on exams and papers? Support your position with evidence from your own experiences, observations or reading.

## Bargain Hunting (Persuasive)

Prices on particular products can vary significantly from store to store. When shopping for a particular item, do you always look for the store with the lowest prices? Are there factors other than price that help to determine where you buy particular products? Explain your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

## Being an Adult (Persuasive) [Writer's Sample Available](#)

According to the law in many states, you become an "adult" at age 18 or 21, but for most people the sense of being an adult does not depend strictly on chronological age. They would argue that a particular experience or series of experiences made them feel adult. What does being an "adult" mean to you? Support your views with specific examples from your own experience, observations or reading.

## Breaking Traditions (Persuasive) [Writer's Sample Available](#)

Many adults become upset when young people break with traditions of the past. Do you think that these adults are justified in reacting this way? Why or why not? Support your position with evidence from your own experience or the experiences of people you know.

## Career Decisions (Persuasive)

In your opinion, what factors should a person consider when choosing a career? Interests? Salaries? Talents? Write an essay in which you discuss which factors are most important for an individual to consider when choosing a career. Support your position with reasons and/or examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

## Choice of Heroes (Persuasive) [Writer's Sample Available](#)

What does our choice of heroes and role models — or the lack of heroes and role models — reveal about our society and ourselves? Use reasons and/or examples from your own reading, experience or observations to support your position.

## Computers and Privilege (Persuasive) [Writer's Sample Available](#)

Some people say that computer technology gives an unfair advantage to a privileged few. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the statement above? Support your views with specific examples from your own experience, observations or reading.

## Conformity and Rebellion (Persuasive) [Writer's Sample Available](#)

Conformity and rebellion are both a part of growing up, but during teenage and young-adult years we often feel a tension between the two. We may be aware of the need to conform but still have the desire to rebel, or at least to assert our individuality. In your judgment, which force is stronger during these years — the urge to rebel or the urge to conform? Support your position with evidence from your own experience or your observations of other people.

## Defining a Generation (Persuasive) [Writer's Sample Available](#)

Every generation has something distinctive about it. One generation may be more politically active, another more self-centered, another more pessimistic. Identify a significant characteristic of your own generation, and explain why you think that this characteristic is good or bad. Support your point of view with examples from your own experience, reading or observation.

### Division of Labor (Persuasive)

For many people, college provides their first experience of living in a room or house with their peers, rather than family. In order to live together harmoniously, roommates often need to agree on a set of rules that define each roommate's rights and responsibilities. In your view, what kinds of rules are necessary to ensure fairness and harmony among roommates? Support your position with reasons and examples from your experiences and observations.

### Fads and Trends (Persuasive) [Writer's Sample Available](#)

Briefly describe a fad or trend that you dislike. Explain why it has attracted so many followers and why you dislike it. Develop your point of view by giving reasons and/or examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### Games (Persuasive) [Writer's Sample Available](#)

"Children waste far too much time playing games when they could be involved in more constructive activities." —E. Gorkin. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the opinion stated above? Support your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### Gap Year (Persuasive)

At least one major United States university officially recommends that high school students take a year off — a so-called gap year — before starting college. The gap year idea is gaining popularity. Supporters say it helps students mature and focus on their goals. Detractors say taking a year off from school will get students off track and that many will never go to college if they don't go right away. Do you think taking a gap year is a good idea? Why or why not?

### Heroes Today (Persuasive)

Who, if anyone, do you think are our heroes today? How do they influence our lives for better or worse? Support your position with reasons and/or examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### Images of Beauty (Persuasive) [Writer's Sample Available](#)

Images of beauty — both male and female — are promoted in magazines, in movies, on billboards, and on television. Explain the extent to which you think these images can be beneficial or harmful.

### Instincts (Persuasive) [Writer's Sample Available](#)

People are often advised to follow their own instincts and behave in a way that feels natural. Do you think this is good advice? Why or why not? Develop your point of view by giving reasons and/or examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### Liberal Arts Education (Persuasive)

In the ancient world, the term "liberal arts" referred to the education appropriate for free people (as opposed to slaves). In modern American higher education, the term is used to describe an education that focuses on general, rather than vocational, knowledge. Proponents believe that a liberal arts education is valuable because it prepares students for life by teaching them how to think. Opponents contend that the study of topics unrelated to one's professional path is a waste of time. Is a liberal arts education worthwhile? Develop your position by using evidence from your own experience, observations, or reading.

### Male and Female Roles (Persuasive)

Some people believe that major changes have occurred over the past few decades in attitudes toward what male and female roles should be in society. Others, however, believe that although some changes have taken place, traditional attitudes toward male and female roles continue in the family, in the workplace and in personal relationships. In your view, to what extent have attitudes toward the roles of men and woman changed or remained traditional? Support your positions with examples drawn from your own experiences or from your observations of others.

### Mandatory Voting (Persuasive)

Many United States citizens who are eligible to vote choose not to do so. Some people argue that low voter turnout is a threat to democracy because it results in a government that does not represent all of its citizens. Australia and other countries have addressed this problem by passing laws that require all eligible voters to participate in elections. Are mandatory voting laws an acceptable solution to the problem of low voter turnout? Explain your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### Modern Conveniences (Persuasive)

Modern conveniences such as fast food, automated teller machines, and labor-saving appliances promise to make life easier. Do these products and services actually make our lives more convenient or do they simply create new problems? Explain your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### Music (Persuasive) [Writer's Sample Available](#)

Some have said that music not only entertains people but also influences their thinking and behavior. To what extent do you think music has the power to influence as well as to entertain people? Support your views with reasons or examples from your reading, observations or experience.

### Parties Over? (Persuasive)

Surveys show that about 38 percent of the American public considers itself politically independent: not affiliated with either the Democratic or Republican Party. There are more independents than either Democrats or Republicans. These independent voters report that they see little difference between the Democrats and Republicans, and they are less likely to vote than members of the dominant parties. Given that so few Americans align themselves with a political party, does it even make sense to preserve the old party distinctions? In your opinion, would America be better off or worse off if political parties were abolished and all candidates ran as independents? Support your position with reasons and/or examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### Peer Pressure (Persuasive)

Peer pressure — the influence that friends and classmates have on one another — is almost always described as a negative force that leads to undesirable behavior, but it can also encourage positive behavior. Under what circumstances can peer pressure have positive effects? Write an essay exploring the potentially positive effects of peer pressure. Explain your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### Physical Education Requirements (Persuasive)

Most universities require students to take at least one physical education course in order to graduate. Some require as many as four courses. Supporters of the physical education requirements argue that these courses are important to maintain student wellness. Others feel that college students should be responsible for their own physical health and that academics, not exercise, should be the focus of a college degree. Write an essay in which you argue for or against university physical education requirements. Support your position with reasons and/or examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### Product Liability (Persuasive)

"Recently, major tobacco companies agreed to pay a financial settlement to several states, including California, for health problems caused by cigarette smoking and other kinds of tobacco addiction. This is unfair and unreasonable. Should car manufacturers be made to pay big settlements because people drive badly and have accidents? Should the makers of cell phones be held responsible for accidents people have because they are driving or using equipment while talking? No company should be made to pay because people misuse its products." —Edna Hacker Explain Hacker's argument and discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with her analysis. Support your position, providing reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### Raising Children (Persuasive)

Discuss what you consider an important challenge that parents face in raising children today, and explain how this challenge affects family life. Support your position with reasons and/or examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### Reality Class (Persuasive)

A reality television show about college life has requested permission to film one of your classes throughout the semester. How do you think the presence of a film crew would affect your educational experience? Write an essay making a case for or against granting the reality show permission to film your class. Use reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading to support your position.

### Rebellion (Persuasive) [Writer's Sample Available](#)

Some people claim that a little rebellion now and then is a good thing. What do you think: is it a good thing to rebel a little now and then? Support your position with evidence from your own experience or from the experiences of people you know.

### Senior Year (Persuasive)

"As far as I'm concerned, we can do away with the senior year of high school. The majority of students spend most of their time and effort either avoiding class work or planning their social activities." —P.N. Tracton To what extent do you agree or disagree with the argument above? Support your position with evidence from your own experiences or observations.

### Single-Sex Education (Persuasive)

Women's colleges, once common in the United States, have been going coeducational in increasing numbers in the past 40 years. Many people argue that women's colleges are unnecessary, now that all of the major United States colleges and universities are open to women. Others, citing studies that show that graduates of women's colleges are more successful than women who graduate from coed colleges, argue that women's colleges still have much to offer. Are single-sex colleges obsolete, or do they still provide an important alternative to coed colleges? Support your position with reasons and/or examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### Speaking of Sloth (Persuasive)

"Indolence is a delightful but distressing state; we must be doing something to be happy." —Mahatma Gandhi  
According to Gandhi, true happiness comes through work or action rather than through leisure. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this view? Explain your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### Television President (Persuasive)

In 1960, presidential candidates John Kennedy and Richard Nixon faced off in a televised debate. The debate is now famous because it established the power of television in politics. The handsome, camera-friendly Kennedy won the approval of the viewing audience, while Nixon came off looking sour and uncomfortable. Since then, presidential candidates' personalities and screen presence have made a huge difference in their chances of winning office. Are Americans justified in giving so much weight to candidates' television presence? Support your position with reasons and/or examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### The Age of Cynicism (Persuasive)

Some people believe that 24-hour news coverage of corporate, government and celebrity scandals has led to an increase in cynicism, the belief that people are motivated only by self-interest. What evidence do you see that supports or refutes the idea that we live in an age of cynicism? Explain your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### The Five- (or More) Year Plan (Persuasive) Writer's Sample Available

Statistics from the United States Department of Education show that the majority of students who enroll in four-year colleges now take longer than four years to graduate. Why might today's students take longer to graduate than students in past generations? Support your position with reasons and/or examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### The Way Things Are Today (Persuasive)

"We have all heard someone say, 'They just don't make them like they used to.' When I was a kid, my grandmother would stand at her kitchen counter and almost instantly throw together a little flour, some sugar, butter — and something else magical — to produce flaky, rich biscuits. Apparently it's now a lost art. Oh, I can find some doughy things in a foil tube at the grocery store or follow some package directions to 'just add water,' but the results are disappointing; those so-called biscuits just stick to the roof of my mouth, and they're tasteless except for the faint flavor of chalk. I find, though, that I just don't have the time to make biscuits from scratch, and no one in my family quite remembers Grandma's recipe anyway." Complaints like the one above are common, but are they accurate as criticisms of the way things are today? Discuss whether you think that, in general, older and better ways of doing things are being replaced by newer but less satisfactory ways. Support your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### Too Many Questions? (Persuasive)

High school and college students in the United States are encouraged to think independently, to challenge accepted ideas, and to question new ideas and opinions. Although most people agree that it is essential for students to think critically about the ideas they encounter, some worry that too much emphasis on independent thinking may encourage students to reject or ignore other people's ideas. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this view? Explain your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### Virtual Friends (Persuasive)

The use of instant messaging, online social networks, e-mail and other forms of electronic communication has become increasingly common among people of all ages. How do these new technologies affect the way we socialize and build relationships? Explain your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### Want/Should (Persuasive) Writer's Sample Available

Often in life we experience a conflict in choosing between something we want to do and something we feel we should do. In your opinion, are there any circumstances in which it is better for people to do what they want to do rather than what they feel they should do? Support your position with evidence from your own experience or your observations of other people.

### Young People and Selfishness (Persuasive) Writer's Sample Available

"Too many young people are motivated by selfish interests; they lack concern for anything beyond themselves." —E. Boyle  
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the statement above? Support your views with specific examples from your own experience, reading or observations.

## College Level I — Business-Focused

### Advertising and Obesity (Persuasive)

A recent study in the *Journal of Pediatric Obesity* reports that, if current trends continue, almost half the children in North and South America and 38 percent of those in the European Union will be obese by 2010. Physicians studying the trend place much of the blame on the advertising and marketing industry, which, they say, pushes junk food on kids relentlessly. Some physicians argue that, given the massive human and financial toll this potential epidemic could take, all advertising of junk food to children should be banned. Do you agree or disagree? Explain your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### CEO Salaries (Persuasive)

The salaries of chief executive officers (CEOs) reportedly grew by 480 percent between 1980 and 2003. As a result, the gap between CEO salaries and employee salaries has widened every year since the 1980s. Many CEOs of public companies earn 100 times or more what their average employees make. Is it appropriate for CEOs to receive multimillion-dollar compensation packages, or should CEO salaries be brought more in line with employee salaries? Support your position with reasons and/or examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### Choosing a Job (Persuasive)

If two different companies offered you similar jobs at similar salaries, how would you decide which offer to accept? What qualities might make one company more or less attractive than the other? Write an essay exploring the information you would use to make your decision. Explain your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### Company Loyalty (Persuasive)

It used to be common for workers to spend their entire careers with the same company, but workers today are more likely to work for several different companies during their careers. Do you think that this trend benefits workers or hurts them? Explain your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### Corporate Criminals (Persuasive)

Charges of fraud, shady accounting practices and other corporate misdeeds have rocked the business world in recent years. Though the perpetrators of such crimes cost employees and investors millions of dollars, they usually receive fines instead of jail sentences. When a jail sentence is given, it is usually only a few months in a minimum-security facility. Should the punishment for corporate leaders who commit white-collar crimes be more severe? Explain your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### Customer Service (Persuasive)

"Always treat your employees exactly as you want them to treat your best customers." —Stephen Covey. Do you agree with Covey that good customer service comes from managers modeling proper behavior, or should employees be treated one way and customers another? Explain your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### Data Mining (Persuasive)

Many businesses now use computer records to collect and track information on their customers' shopping habits — a strategy called data mining. Retailers use this information to make decisions about what products to carry, or even to tailor their advertisements to particular customers who have bought specific products in the past. Businesses say the practice leads to better understanding of, and better service for, their customers, but consumer advocates worry that consumer privacy is at risk. Which argument do you believe is right? Explain your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **Do Not Call (Persuasive)**

Since 2003, United States residents have had the option of registering their telephone numbers on the National Do Not Call Registry to limit the telemarketing calls they receive. Once a number is registered, most telemarketers would be legally barred from calling. In your opinion, is it a good idea for the government to intervene in business practices — like telemarketing — that many people find annoying, though not damaging? Explain your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **Dress for Success (Persuasive)**

Until the 1990s, business suits were standard attire in the corporate world. These days, corporate dress codes vary — some employers still expect employees to wear suits while others welcome much more casual dress. While many people welcome the increased comfort and freedom of casual business attire, others believe that casual dress in the corporate workplace is unprofessional or even harmful. Write an essay exploring the pros and cons of the trend toward casual dress in the workplace. Explain your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **Long Hours, More Perks (Persuasive)**

The days of 9-to-5 jobs are past. United States office workers are increasingly expected to work nine or more hours a day, with lunches eaten hastily at the desk and extra work done at home on weekends. In order to keep employees functioning and reasonably happy, some companies have begun offering a variety of on-the-job perks: subsidized gourmet lunches in the company cafeteria, a company gym, free on-site massages, on-site daycare, even on-site pet care. In your opinion, are these types of perks effective in keeping employees productive and happy? Support your position with reasons and/or examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **Management by Objectives (Persuasive)**

A popular management technique is Management by Objectives, wherein managers ask employees to suggest their own goals and timelines for work and hold the employee responsible for meeting those goals. Do you believe this approach would be more or less effective for motivating employees than traditional management-directed assignments? Explain your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **Maternity Leave (Persuasive)**

In Sweden, all working parents are entitled to 16 weeks of paid leave per child. The cost is shared by the government and the employer. In the United States, the Family and Medical Leave Act requires some employers to provide a maximum of 12 weeks of unpaid leave for parents, but the act only applies to about 60 percent of workers. Should the United States enact more generous parental leave laws? Why or why not? Explain your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **Net Gain (Persuasive)**

"I have found no greater satisfaction than achieving success through honest dealing and strict adherence to the view that, for you to gain, those you deal with should gain as well." —Alan Greenspan. Greenspan argues that one person's success should not come at someone else's expense. To what extent do you agree or disagree with Greenspan's opinion about a successful career? State your opinion, and support your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **Retirement Age (Persuasive)**

Many consider the current standard retirement age of 65 a relic of a time when health woes often hampered the productivity of older workers. Today, with life expectancy in the United States reaching 80 years, many older workers argue that they are fit and willing to continue working into their 70s and beyond. Medical research, however, seems to indicate that while older Americans are fitter than they used to be, they are nonetheless physically and mentally slower than their younger counterparts. Should older workers still be compelled to retire at age 65? Explain your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **Shorter Weeks (Persuasive)**

In the European Union, a statute dictates that employees may not work more than 48 hours per week, and any work done after the standard 35 hours per week is considered overtime. In many member countries, fixed employment usually comes with four to six weeks of paid leave per year. In the United States, the standard work week is 40 hours, although many people put in much longer hours without overtime compensation, and fixed employment generally comes with two weeks of paid leave. Would it be a good idea for the United States to adopt a more European model by imposing government restrictions on working hours and encouraging business to offer longer paid leaves? Why or why not? Explain your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **Smoke Out (Persuasive)**

In an effort to reduce future health-care costs, a major United States company is considering giving a small pay increase to all of its nonsmoking employees. They hope to encourage employees who do smoke to quit, thus reducing the amount they may have to pay in future health coverage. Do you believe this decision would be an effective way to both reduce health-care costs and encourage employees to lead healthier lifestyles? Explain your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **Surfing at Work (Persuasive)**

Most companies monitor Internet and e-mail use by their workers. Employers are concerned about excessive personal Internet use during business hours and threats from spyware and viruses. Employers have the right to set policy about use of computers, but how restrictive should they be? Should all personal use of the Internet and e-mail be banned? Should employers rely on their workers to use their best judgment on Internet use? Explain your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **Team Building (Persuasive)**

Some managers believe it is important for employees working toward a common goal to feel bonded to each other so they can work well as a team. Many programs and activities exist to foster such relationships. Is the team mentality a crucial factor in a group's success? Are team-building activities good for employees, or are they unnecessary or perhaps even detrimental? Explain your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **The Electronic Office (Persuasive)**

The Internet, laptop computers, cellular phones and other technology allow many people to stay in touch with colleagues and clients even when they are at home or on the road. What are the advantages and disadvantages of this kind of technology? Explain your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **The Four P's (Persuasive)**

People who are trying to market a product often speak of the Four P's that need to be considered in any marketing campaign: Product (what is being sold), Price (how much it costs), Place (where it is being distributed), and Promotion (how one communicates with customers). In your opinion, which of the Four P's is least important? Explain your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

## **College Level II – General**

### **A+ Professor (Persuasive)**

What makes a professor great? Prominence in his or her field? A hot new book? Good student reviews every semester? What standards should be used to assess the quality of college faculty members? Support your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **Academic Achievement vs. Age (Persuasive)**

"School children should be grouped according to their levels of academic achievement rather than by their ages." Discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with this opinion. Support your views with specific reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **Achievements vs. Talents (Persuasive)**

"Parents, teachers and employers should reward achievements rather than talents." Discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with this opinion. Support your views with specific reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **An A for Effort (Persuasive)** Writer's Sample Available

"Although some people argue that grades should be based entirely on students' level of mastery, rewarding effort will teach students the importance of hard work." Discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with this opinion. Support your views with specific reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **Billionaire Dropouts (Persuasive)**

A number of high-profile businesspeople are college dropouts who abandoned college to focus on following their dreams. With such success stories in the high-tech and entertainment fields, it is easy to understand the temptation some students feel to drop out of college to pursue their entrepreneurial dreams. If a friend was considering dropping out of college to start a business, how would you decide whether to encourage that decision? Support your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **Bullying and E-Learning (Persuasive)**

"Students who are bullied by their classmates should have the option to attend school via the Internet." Discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with this opinion. Support your views with specific reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **Cell Phone Jammers (Persuasive)**

The use of mobile phones is discouraged in many public spaces, with varying degrees of success. If the technology were legal and available, should places like theaters, restaurants and parks install blocking devices that would make it impossible for patrons to make calls? Support your position with evidence from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **Challenging Ideas (Persuasive)**

"Students should be encouraged to challenge the ideas and facts that are presented to them in school." Discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with this opinion. Support your views with specific reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **College and Career Goals (Persuasive)**

"High school graduates should delay college until they have a clear idea of their career goals." Discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with this opinion. Support your views with specific reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **College Costs (Persuasive)**

"The rising cost of a college education is the fault of students who demand that colleges offer students luxuries unheard of by earlier generations of college students — single dorm rooms, private bathrooms, gourmet meals, etc." Discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with this opinion. Support your views with specific reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **Community Service (Persuasive)** Writer's Sample Available

Some people have suggested that everyone between the ages of 18 and 21 should be required to perform one year of community or government service, such as in the Peace Corps, Environmental Conservancy Corps, a hospital, the military, a rural or inner-city school, or other community outreach projects. Should government or community service be required of 18- to 21-year-olds? Support your point of view with reasons from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **Electives (Persuasive)**

"Schools should offer electives such as music and art only to those students who have mastered core subjects such as reading, math, and science." Discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with this opinion. Support your views with specific reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **E-mail and Writing Skills (Persuasive)**

"Educators should encourage the current popularity of e-mail and instant messaging among teenagers because this trend is sure to improve their students' reading and writing skills." Discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with this opinion. Support your views with specific reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **Entertainment Options (Persuasive)**

"A college education should equip one to entertain three things: a friend, an idea and oneself." —Thomas Ehrlich. Ehrlich suggests that a college education should prepare us not just to understand ideas but also to entertain ourselves and others. How might a college education equip us to entertain friends or ourselves? Explain your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **File Sharing (Persuasive)**

In the United States, it is considered illegal to download and share music files over the Internet. But should online file sharing be illegal? Both Canada and France have declared peer-to-peer music file sharing to be legal. Should the United States follow in their footsteps? Why or why not? Explain your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **Gadgets and Self-Reliance (Persuasive)**

"Our increasing reliance on high-tech gadgets will eventually make us less able to take care of ourselves." Discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with this opinion. Support your views with specific reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### Getting Along with Others (Persuasive)

"One of the most important skills that children need to learn in order to succeed is the ability to get along with others." Discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with this opinion. Support your views with specific reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### Going for Distance (Persuasive)

Thanks to the Internet, distance education is a booming business. The ability to pursue a college degree online is allowing many people who could not attend a traditional college because of constraints such as work and child-rearing get the education they want. But should a degree earned entirely online be considered equivalent to a degree earned at a traditional brick-and-mortar university? How might the differences between online education and traditional classroom learning affect the educational experience? State your position and support it with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### Good Manners (Persuasive)

"Traditional 'good manners' are meaningless today, and parents should no longer stress them." Discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with this opinion. Support your views with specific reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### Grades (Persuasive) Writer's Sample Available

Some people argue that having grades in our school systems puts too much emphasis on competition among students and not enough emphasis on learning for its own sake. Others argue that without a precise grading system, students would not work as hard to excel in their studies because they would not have a standard against which to measure their performance. Should letter grading systems be replaced with pass/fail grading systems? Support your point of view with specific reasons and/or examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### Handwriting vs. Typing (Persuasive)

"In the current computer age, schools should replace handwriting instruction with keyboarding." Discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with this opinion. Support your views with specific reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### History Then and Now (Persuasive)

A professor of ancient Roman history constantly compares past events to current news items, so much so that the class seems more about current events than ancient Rome. The professor contends that learning about the past is pointless if the lessons are not applied to the present. Do you agree or disagree with the professor's statement? Explain your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### Living Wage (Persuasive)

"Employers have a moral obligation to ensure that their workers are paid well enough to maintain a decent standard of living." Discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with this opinion. Support your views with specific reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### Making Decisions (Persuasive)

"The academic knowledge that is taught in high schools is worthless if schools don't also prepare students to make their own decisions." Discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with this opinion. Support your views with specific reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### Multimedia Teaching (Persuasive)

"In order to hold their students' interest, teachers should try to present material through video and multimedia presentations rather than through books and lectures." Discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with this opinion. Support your views with specific reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### Naturally Lucky ? (Persuasive)

"I am a great believer in luck, and I find the harder I work, the more I have of it." —Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson believed that luck was often the result of hard work rather than mere chance. Are some people just lucky, or do good things more often come to those who work hard to create opportunities for themselves? Explain your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **Nonviolence (Persuasive)**

"Nonviolence is the answer to the crucial political and moral questions of our time; the need for mankind to overcome oppression and violence without resorting to oppression and violence. Mankind must evolve for all human conflict a method which rejects revenge, aggression and retaliation. The foundation of such a method is love." —Martin Luther King, Jr. Do you agree or disagree with King's assertion that love and nonviolence can be powerful enough to overcome oppression? Explain your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **Now You See It (Persuasive)**

Some people believe that "absence makes the heart grow fonder." Others believe that "out of sight is out of mind." In your experience, which of these clichés holds true more often? Support your position with reasons and examples from your experience and observations.

### **On One Condition (Persuasive)**

A wealthy graduate offers to donate a large sum of money to your college with the condition that the college require all students to pass a course in personal money management before they can graduate. Should the college accept the donation and the conditions? Explain your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **Optimizing Summer Vacation (Persuasive)**

Some students look forward to summer break as a time to relax and escape the pressures of college life. Others see summer break as a time to work to earn money for school. Still others scramble for high-profile internships that they believe will help them in the job market when they graduate. Assuming that you could afford any of these options, which would you choose and why? Explain your decision with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **Realistic Career Goals (Persuasive)**

"Schools and parents should encourage young people to be realistic rather than idealistic about their career goals." Discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with this opinion. Support your views with specific reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **Reality TV (Persuasive)**

"Television shows and movies should spend less time portraying how things are now and more time on how things should be." Discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with this opinion. Support your views with specific reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **Require Community Service (Persuasive)**

Some high schools and colleges require their students to perform community service before graduation. Some critics of these policies worry that turning this service into a requirement will make students less likely to do volunteer community service after graduation. Should schools and colleges require students to perform community service? Support your views with specific reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **Setting Expectations (Persuasive)**

"It is cruel and dishonest to tell children that they can achieve anything they set their minds to." Discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with this opinion. Support your views with specific reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **Sick Days (Persuasive)**

Some people pride themselves on never missing work or school even when they are ill, but many employers and teachers have begun to encourage sick workers and students to stay home in order to avoid spreading illnesses to others. Should we make an effort to go to work or school even when we're ill, or is it acceptable or even preferable to stay home when we are sick? Develop your position by using evidence from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **Smoking and Health Insurance (Persuasive)**

"Insurance companies and government health-care programs should not pay for the treatment of medical conditions caused by smoking cigarettes or abusing drugs or alcohol." Discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with this opinion. Support your views with specific reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **Summer School (Persuasive)**

Some college students take summer courses in order to earn their degrees more quickly; others believe that a summer break from academics allows them to return to their studies refreshed and ready to study. What are the main advantages and disadvantages of taking college classes over the summer? Do you believe the positives outweigh the negatives, or are you mostly against taking classes over the summer? Explain your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **SUV TV (Persuasive)**

Recent years have seen an explosion in the number of cars, SUVs, and minivans that come equipped with DVD players and video screens. Busy parents like the DVD players because they keep kids quiet and entertained on trips. But with kids already watching an average of four hours a television a day, is putting a video player in the family vehicle just too much? Do you believe it is a good idea to let children watch videos in the car? Explain your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **Teacher Salaries and Student Achievement (Persuasive)**

"Teachers' salaries should be based on their students' level of achievement rather than on seniority or other factors." Discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with this opinion. Support your views with specific reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **The C Prof (Persuasive)**

A world-renowned professor at your college offers a class that all other students say is the most insightful and brilliant on campus. The topic of the class interests you, but the professor is a notoriously hard grader. If given the opportunity, would you take the class or not? Explain your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **The Letter of the Law (Persuasive)**

Your school's official honor code has not been updated for a decade. As it is currently written, the school's code prohibits the use of pocket calculators on exams but does not specifically state that using other electronic equipment like laptops or handheld computers is against the rules. Should a student who uses the calculator function on a laptop computer or other device during an exam be punished for breaking the honor code? Explain your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **Untested Virtue (Persuasive)**

"I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue." —John Milton. British poet John Milton famously argued that a belief or conviction that is never tested by contact with challenging or contrary views is not worthy of praise and perhaps should not even be called a "virtue." Therefore, someone who believes in something like protecting the environment or free speech must be willing to stand up for that belief even in the face of strong opposition. Do you agree with Milton? Why or why not? Explain your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **When in Rome (Persuasive)**

An adage advises, "When in Rome, do as the Romans do." When is it preferable to adapt your behavior to local customs and when should you maintain the standards of your own culture? Explain your position with examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **Who's Watching You? (Persuasive)**

With computers tracking the Web sites we visit, and surveillance cameras observing us in many public places, many people feel that their right to privacy has been violated. Do you think that this kind of monitoring is justifiable? Support your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

## **College Level II — Business-Focused**

### **A Reflection on Society (Persuasive)**

"Advertising reflects the mores of society, but it does not influence them." —David Ogilvy Ogilvy argues that advertising does not influence a society's accepted customs and attitudes, it merely reflects the values that already exist. To what extent do you agree or disagree with Ogilvy's opinion about advertising? Explain your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **Bad for You (Persuasive)**

In the 1990s, former smokers met with success in various lawsuits against big tobacco companies. More recently, a number of people have attempted to sue fast-food chains, blaming medical problems like obesity and diabetes on the food that these companies sell. Do you believe businesses that offer products that are legal but bad for you should be held liable for the effects their products have on people's health? Explain your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **Blow the Whistle? (Persuasive)**

When should an employee report misconduct by his or her boss? Most people would agree that illegal or dangerous activity should be reported to higher-ups or the police. But what if the misconduct is relatively minor — like failing to report sick days or engaging in an interoffice romantic relationship? Do you believe an employee should report such minor misconduct? Explain your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **Caveat Emptor (Persuasive)**

Caveat emptor is a Latin phrase meaning "Let the buyer beware." The phrase dates from a time when buyers had no assurances of the quality of the goods they bought, and no legal recourse if dissatisfied with their purchases. Today, most stores allow buyers to return unsatisfactory products. There are no such policies, however, on many popular Internet sites that allow individuals to sell, trade or auction goods. Should a law be passed protecting Internet swappers and shoppers? Or should online buyers be left to their own best judgment? Explain your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **Focus (Persuasive)**

Often, the most successful people — in business, athletics, entertainment or any field — are those who have focused all of their attention on achieving a specific goal. Those who spread their energy in many directions may not be as successful. In your opinion, how much of success is the result of remaining focused? Explain your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **Forgotten Jobs (Persuasive)**

Twenty years ago, almost all documents were created using typewriters. Today, the typewriter industry is virtually nonexistent, as most work is done on computers. Twenty years from now, what current industry or industries do you think will be obsolete? Explain your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **Free E-mail (Persuasive)**

One of the greatest uses of the Internet is e-mail, which allows messages and other data to be sent anywhere in the world instantly with no cost. The downside of e-mail is spam, which clutters many e-mail accounts with unwanted messages. Some of the larger Internet service providers have floated the idea of charging a small fee for every e-mail. This would, they argue, put an end to much of the spam being sent. Is charging a fee a good idea, or are the benefits of a free system to be kept at all costs, including excessive spamming? Explain your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **High Oil Prices (Persuasive)**

"Although rising oil prices may hurt the United States economy in the short run, they will ultimately benefit the economy by encouraging the development of alternative forms of energy and more fuel-efficient vehicles." To what extent do you agree or disagree with the argument above? Support your position with evidence from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **Holiday Parties (Persuasive)**

Office winter-holiday parties have a reputation for being awkward, obligatory functions that cost companies a lot of money even though no one really enjoys them. Still, most people like the idea of a company-sponsored social function of some sort. If you were running a company, would you have a holiday celebration, and if so, how might you change the tradition to make it less awkward? Explain what kind of company holiday social function you think would be best. Explain your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **Internet Shopping (Persuasive)**

As people have become more at ease with shopping online, the number of Internet retailers has boomed. Most major retailers have an online presence. Local specialty stores that were being forced out of business by big-brand retailers are suddenly finding new, international demand for their wares. As more and more families have computers at home and access to the Internet approaches 100 percent, will Internet shopping come to replace physically going to the mall, bookstore or even the supermarket? Explain your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **Model Company (Persuasive)**

From time to time, a particular company is vilified in the press for engaging in questionable business practices, such as accounting fraud or insider trading. Other businesses receive bad press for other misconduct, such as damaging the environment. Clearly, there are some corporate actions that make companies very unpopular with the public. Are there actions that can make a company popular instead? What sort of personality traits should a truly admirable company exhibit? Give your own definition of a model company and support that definition with reasons and examples from your experiences, observations or reading.

### **Protect or Change? (Persuasive)**

To control costs and remain competitive in the global economy, many United States businesses are outsourcing jobs previously performed by United States workers to countries with lower labor costs. United States workers have been losing manufacturing jobs to overseas factories for years, but now service-industry jobs such as telemarketing, customer service and technical support are also being outsourced. Should the United States government institute measures to discourage businesses from finding cheaper labor in other countries, or should it encourage its workers to focus on developing the kinds of skills that will make those workers more desirable to employers? Explain your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **Protective Governments (Persuasive)**

In most cases, a nation with free, open markets for a given commodity benefits by having low prices for that product, although this can often mean that the product is produced primarily overseas. For some industries — like steel, public utilities, and basic agricultural goods — governments often impose barriers on overseas companies, believing that losing control of such industries could weaken the nation. This leads to national control, but also higher prices. Do you feel the extra cost is worthwhile for a nation, or is it unnecessary? Explain your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **Robber Barons (Persuasive)**

The term "robber barons" first referred to several prominent late-nineteenth-century industrialists who made vast fortunes by employing modern manufacturing techniques and monopolizing their various industries, often to the detriment of workers and those who needed the goods and services they provided. Some people defend these industrialists by pointing out that these were self-made successes, born into modest or even poor families, who earned their wealth through hard work and ingenuity. Others point to their ostentatious displays of wealth and their seeming disregard for the welfare of their workers. Can you think of any industry leaders today who might be deemed robber barons? Explain why you think the label fits using reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **Salary and Satisfaction (Persuasive)**

Having a high-paying job certainly has financial advantages, but a lifetime of work in an industry that is unappealing to a person is not a recipe for happiness. Should salary be the most important factor when deciding on a job, or are there other things that are more important? If so, what are they? Explain your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **Setting Salaries (Persuasive)**

A common model for establishing employee compensation is that salary should be determined solely by an individual's contribution to an organization. In your opinion, are there circumstances in which people's salaries should be based on something other than their contributions to their organizations? Explain your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **The Business of Politics (Persuasive)**

It has been said that running a big company is no different than governing a state or a country. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Explain your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **The Customer Is Always Right (Persuasive)**

The notion that the customer is always right is very common, especially in businesses where employees have direct contact with customers. The idea behind the phrase is that businesses, in order to be successful, must meet the demands of their customers, even when those demands are unreasonable. Do you agree or disagree that the customer is always right? Explain your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **The Harm in Charity (Persuasive)**

"Charity is injurious unless it helps the recipient to become independent of it." —John D. Rockefeller.

Rockefeller was not alone among wealthy industrialists in his thoughts on charity. Fellow business titan Andrew Carnegie also observed, "One of the serious obstacles to the improvement of our race is indiscriminate charity." Do you agree with Rockefeller and Carnegie, or do you believe that charity is necessary and beneficial? Explain your position with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

### **The Lone Superpower (Persuasive)**

The United States' economy is, by far, the largest in the world. Do you think this will still be the case 10 years from now? What about in 50 years? What factors do you believe are most important in determining the United States' future economic position? Explain with reasons and examples from your own experiences, observations or reading.

## Perspective on an Issue

### Best Ideas Writer's Sample Available

Present your perspective on the issue below, using relevant reasons and/or examples to support your views. "The best ideas arise from a passionate interest in commonplace things."

### Declining Environment Writer's Sample Available

Present your perspective on the issue below, using relevant reasons and/or examples to support your views. "Our declining environment may bring the people of the world together as no politician, philosopher, or war ever could. Environmental problems are global in scope and respect no nation's boundaries. Therefore, people are faced with the choice of unity and cooperation on the one hand or disunity and a common tragedy on the other."

### Duty of Educators Writer's Sample Available

Present your perspective on the issue below, using relevant reasons and/or examples to support your views. "It is unfortunate that today's educators place so much emphasis on finding out what students want to include in the curriculum and then giving it to them. It is the educators' duty to determine the curriculum and the students' duty to study what is presented to them."

### Generalists vs. Specialists Writer's Sample Available

Present your perspective on the issue below, using relevant reasons and/or examples to support your views. "In our time, specialists of all kinds are highly over-rated. We need more generalists--people who can provide broad perspectives."

### Higher Education Writer's Sample Available

Present your perspective on the issue below, using relevant reasons and/or examples to support your views. "It is important for higher education to challenge established traditions and values."

### Media and Social Values Writer's Sample Available

Present your perspective on the issue below, using relevant reasons and/or examples to support your views. "The media (books, film, music, television, for example) tend to create rather than reflect the values of a society."

### Technology and Loneliness Writer's Sample Available

Present your perspective on the issue below, using relevant reasons and/or examples to support your views. "Both the development of technological tools and the uses to which humanity has put them have created modern civilizations in which loneliness is ever increasing."

### Wisdom Writer's Sample Available

Present your perspective on the issue below, using relevant reasons and/or examples to support your views. "Wisdom is rightfully attributed not to people who know what to look for in life but to people who know what to ignore."

## Analyze an Argument

### Roller Skating Writer's Sample Available

Discuss how well reasoned you find this argument. Hospital statistics regarding people who go to the emergency room after roller-skating accidents indicate the need for more protective equipment. Within this group of people, 75 percent of those who had accidents in streets or parking lots were not wearing any protective clothing (helmets, knee pads, etc.) or any light-reflecting material (clip-on lights, glow-in-the-dark wrist pads, etc.). Clearly, these statistics indicate that by investing in high-quality protective gear and reflective equipment, roller skaters will greatly reduce their risk of being severely injured in an accident.

### Scott Woods Writer's Sample Available

Discuss how well reasoned you find this argument. The following appeared as a letter to the editor of a local newspaper. "Five years ago, we residents of Morganton voted to keep the publicly owned piece of land known as Scott Woods in a natural, undeveloped state. Our thinking was that, if no shopping centers or houses were built there, Scott Woods would continue to benefit our community as a natural parkland. But now that our town planning committee wants to purchase the land and build a school there, we should reconsider this issue. If the land becomes a school site, no shopping centers or houses can be built there, and substantial acreage would probably be devoted to athletic fields. There would be no better use of land in our community than this, since a large majority of our children participate in sports, and Scott Woods would continue to benefit our community as a natural parkland."

### **Silver Screen Movies** Writer's Sample Available

Discuss how well reasoned you find this argument. The following is taken from a memo from the advertising director of the Silver Screen Movie Production Company. "According to a recent report from our marketing department, fewer people attended movies produced by Silver Screen during the past year than in any other year. And yet the percentage of generally favorable comments by movie reviewers about specific Silver Screen movies actually increased during this period. Clearly, the contents of these reviews are not reaching enough of our prospective viewers; so the problem lies not with the quality of our movies but with the public's lack of awareness that movies of good quality are available. Silver Screen should therefore spend more of its budget next year on reaching the public through advertising and less on producing new movies."

### **Smile Bright** Writer's Sample Available

Discuss how well reasoned you find this argument. A recent survey of dental patients showed that people who use Smile-Bright toothpaste are most likely to have capped teeth—artificial but natural-looking protective coverings placed by dentists on individual teeth. Those people who had begun using Smile-Bright toothpaste early in life were more likely to have capped teeth than were people who had begun using Smile-Bright later in life. In addition, those who reported brushing their teeth more than twice a day with Smile-Bright toothpaste were more likely to have caps on their teeth than were those who reported brushing with Smile-Bright less frequently. Therefore, people wishing to avoid having their teeth capped should not use Smile-Bright toothpaste.

### **Speed Limits in Forestville** Writer's Sample Available

Discuss how well reasoned you find this argument. "Six months ago the region of Forestville increased the speed limit for vehicles traveling on the region's highways by ten miles per hour. Since that change took effect, the number of automobile accidents in that region has increased by 15 percent. But the speed limit in Elmsford, a region neighboring Forestville, remained unchanged, and automobile accidents declined slightly during the same six-month period. Therefore, if the citizens of Forestville want to reduce the number of automobile accidents on the region's highways, they should campaign to reduce Forestville's speed limit to what it was before the increase."

### **University of Claria** Writer's Sample Available

Discuss how well reasoned you find this argument. The University of Claria is generally considered one of the best universities in the world because of its instructors' reputation, which is based primarily on the extensive research and publishing record of certain faculty members. In addition, several faculty members are internationally renowned as leaders in their fields. For example, many of the faculty from the English department are regularly invited to teach at universities in other countries. Furthermore, two recent graduates of the physics department have gone on to become candidates for the Nobel Prize in Physics. And 75 percent of the students are able to find employment after graduating. Therefore, because of the reputation of its faculty, the University of Claria should be the obvious choice for anyone seeking a quality education.

## Change in Your School (Expository) Writer's Sample Available

If you could make one important change in a school that you attended, what change would you make? Use reasons and specific examples to support your answer.

## Change Job or Not (Persuasive)

Some people prefer to change jobs or professions during their careers. Others choose to stay in the same job or profession. Discuss the advantages of each choice. Which do you prefer? Use reasons and examples to explain your choice.

## Change Your Hometown (Expository) Writer's Sample Available

If you could change one important thing about your hometown, what would you change? Use reasons and specific examples to support your answer.

## Changes in the 21st Century (Expository) Writer's Sample Available

The 21st century has begun. What changes do you think this new century will bring? Use examples and details in your answer.

## Dorm Roommate (Persuasive) Writer's Sample Available

You have been told that dormitory rooms at your university must be shared by two students. Would you rather have the university assign a student to share a room with you, or would you rather choose your own roommate? Use specific reasons and details to explain your answer.

## Experience or Books (Persuasive) Writer's Sample Available

It has been said, "Not everything that is learned is contained in books." Compare and contrast knowledge gained from experience with knowledge gained from books. In your opinion, which source is more important? Why?

## Films (Expository) Writer's Sample Available

Films can tell us a lot about the country where they were made. What have you learned about a country from watching its movies? Use specific examples and details to support your response.

## Gift of Money (Persuasive) Writer's Sample Available

You have received a gift of money. The money is enough to buy either a piece of jewelry you like or tickets to a concert you want to attend. Which would you buy? Use specific reasons and details to support your answer.

## Group Member or Leader (Persuasive) Writer's Sample Available

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? It is better to be a member of a group than to be the leader of a group. Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

## Hiring Employees (Persuasive) Writer's Sample Available

Businesses should hire employees for their entire lives. Do you agree or disagree? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

## Important Animal (Expository) Writer's Sample Available

What is the most important animal in your country? Why is the animal important? Use reasons and specific details to explain your answer.

## Important Plant (Expository) Writer's Sample Available

Plants can provide food, shelter, clothing or medicine. What is one kind of plant that is important to you or to the people in your country? Use specific reasons and details to explain your choice.

## Important Room (Expository) Writer's Sample Available

What do you consider to be the most important room in a house? Why is this room more important to you than any other room? Use specific reasons and examples to support your opinion.

## Improve Your Community (Expository) Writer's Sample Available

You have decided to give several hours of your time each month to improve the community where you live. What is one thing you will do to improve your community? Why? Use specific reasons and details to explain your choice.

**Land (Expository)** Writer's Sample Available

Imagine that you have received some land to use as you wish. How would you use this land? Use specific details to explain your answer.

**Learn from Mistakes (Persuasive)**

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? People always learn from their mistakes. Use specific reasons and details to support your answer.

**Living Longer (Expository)** Writer's Sample Available

In general, people are living longer now. Discuss the causes of this phenomenon. Use specific reasons and details to develop your essay.

**Method of Travel (Expository)** Writer's Sample Available

You need to travel from your home to a place 40 miles (64 kilometers) away. Compare the different kinds of transportation you could use. Which method of travel would you choose? Give specific reasons for your choice.

**Money and Success (Persuasive)** Writer's Sample Available

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Only people who earn a lot of money are successful. Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

**Money on Technology (Persuasive)** Writer's Sample Available

Some people think that governments should spend as much money as possible on developing or buying computer technology. Other people disagree and think that this money should be spent on more basic needs. Which one of these opinions do you agree with? Use specific reasons and details to support your answer.

**Moving (Expository)** Writer's Sample Available

A person you know is planning to move to your town or city. What do you think this person would like and dislike about living in your town or city? Why? Use specific reasons and details to develop your essay.

**New Product (Expository)** Writer's Sample Available

If you could invent something new, what product would you develop? Use specific details to explain why this invention is needed.

**Plan Children's Free Time (Persuasive)**

Some people think that parents should plan their children's leisure time carefully. Other people believe children should decide for themselves how to spend their free time. Which idea do you agree with? Give reasons for your choice.

**Playing and Winning (Persuasive)** Writer's Sample Available

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Playing a game is fun only when you win. Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

**Preferred Source of News (Persuasive)**

Some people believe that newspapers are the best source of news. Other people think that the news is presented better on radio or television. Which of these sources of news do you prefer? Use specific reasons to support your choice.

**Preferred Teacher Style (Persuasive)**

Some people learn best when a classroom lesson is presented in an entertaining, enjoyable way. Other people learn best when a lesson is presented in a serious, formal way. Which of these two ways of learning do you prefer? Give reasons to support your answer.

**Prepare for a Trip (Expository)** Writer's Sample Available

Imagine that you are preparing for a trip. You plan to be away from your home for a year. In addition to clothing and personal-care items, you can take one thing. What would you take and why? Use specific reasons and details to support your answer.

**Reasons for Attending College (Expository)** Writer's Sample Available

People attend a college or university for many different reasons (for example, new experiences, career preparation and increased knowledge). Why do you think people attend college or university? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

### **Reducing Pollution (Expository)**

There are many kinds of pollution. What can you do to help reduce one kind of pollution in your community? Use examples and specific details to explain your answer.

### **Resources Disappearing (Expository)** [Writer's Sample Available](#)

Many parts of the world are losing important natural resources, such as forests, animals or clean water. Choose one resource that is disappearing and explain why it needs to be saved. Use specific reasons and examples to support your opinion.

### **Show Emotion (Persuasive)**

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? People should always show their strong emotions (such as excitement, anger or joy). Use specific reasons and details to support your answer.

### **Stay in Hometown or Move (Persuasive)**

After they complete their university studies, some students live in their hometowns. Others live in different towns or cities. Which do you think is better — living in your hometown or living in a different town or city? Give reasons for your answer.

### **Successful Students (Expository)**

Successful students do well in school for many different reasons. Identify one or two important personal characteristics that help a student succeed in school. Use specific examples to show why you think these characteristics are important for student success.

### **Why Study Abroad? (Expository)** [Writer's Sample Available](#)

Many students choose to attend schools or universities outside their home countries. Why do some students study abroad? Use specific reasons and details to explain your answer.

### **Young People Teaching Older People (Persuasive)** [Writer's Sample Available](#)

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? There is nothing that young people can teach older people. Use specific reasons and examples to support your position.