



Notes

Types of Timed Writing Prompts

Content Based

Skill Based

Content Based



***Prove your point with evidence from the text.**

This type of test/prompt/question will be based on what you have learned in class, in your assigned readings, and from your homework.

You are expected to show what you know; sometimes, you may be asked to pull a quote or a figure from the text to **prove** your point.

Example:

What was the event that started World War II, and why was it significant? Please support your point with evidence from the text.

This question requires you to know not only the answer, but also that you are able to use a relevant quote or paraphrase to support it. This class would likely allow you to use the book during this exam, refer to your notes, or give you the prompt ahead of time, so you can go into class knowing what quote you want to use.

Skill Based



***Demonstrate your ability to write well on a general topic. These will often ask about your personal experiences.**

This type of prompt/test/question will require that you demonstrate your writing skill (rather than your knowledge of a subject), mechanical proficiency (things like proper spelling and grammar), and structural control (how well your essay flows, if it's ordered well, if it is well thought out).

Example: Write about a time that someone did something that inspired you. How did you feel? Why was it significant and how has it affected the way you are today?

This question requires no specific knowledge; instead, it asks you to answer the prompt in a logical, clear, and organized way.

How to Prepare



***Don't forget to take breaks (5 minutes for every half hour) and to get enough sleep.**

Content Based

- Review lecture notes, note cards, your textbook, and relevant homework assignments.
- Use or make a study guide.
- Form a study group (you can use rooms in the Tutoring Center and Library).
- See a tutor to go over study techniques or help you go over your study guide.

Skill Based

- Practice with the prompts your professor provides.
- Look up sample prompts.
- Practice brainstorming and outlining.
- Work on the fundamentals of spelling, grammar, sentence structure, and essay structure.

On the Day of the Test

- Remember to eat. It's hard to focus on an empty stomach.
- Study a for a bit, so you can refresh yourself on the material.
- Come to class early with all of your test materials (pen, paper, pencil, blue book, etc.)
- Don't let yourself get all stressed out. You prepared. Now it's time to do your best.

During the Test

Read with Purpose

- Read the Prompt and underline/highlight key words and phrases, so you'll know how you are supposed to answer.

Be Timely

- Know how long you have on each question and use your time wisely. Usually, you will have an idea of what form your test will take, especially if you are required to have a specific scan tron. A timed writing essay that you have two hours to work on is going to be a lot different than a fifty question multiple choice test followed by two short answer prompts.

Address the Prompt

- Address the question directly in your response, so you are clearly posing an answer to the question. For a timed essay, this answer to the prompt will be your thesis.

Using Your Time Wisely (broken down into percentages as an example)

- Spend a short amount of time reading the prompt and thinking about how you will answer; you may even consider using scratch paper to form a simple outline before working on a draft (~10%). Drafting your response should take the most of your time as this is when you will fill out your organized and thought out response (~60%). Your final draft will involve taking everything from your initial draft and checking for the thesis and topic sentences and editing for grammar, order, clarity, and effectiveness (~30%).

Tips

- If you have multiple prompts to answer, do the easier one first.
- Don't pay attention to people who finish the test early. Take your time, but check the clock every once in a while.
- Read directions carefully or you might end up doing extra work (some exams will ask you to choose a prompt).

Sample Prompts

Here are 501 Writing Prompts to practice. Pick one and try it out:
<https://www.misd.net/languageart/grammarinaction/501writingprompts.pdf>

Feel free to practice with a question from your study guide or textbook, so the activity will more directly relate to your class.

Sample Prompt Example

Work Cited

Sample Prompt

112. According to an old Greek proverb, "All things good to know are difficult to learn." Do you agree? Why or why not? Use specific reasons and examples to explain your answer. (Short Answer Form)

The old Greek Proverb, "All things good to know are difficult to learn" is not accurate because there are plenty of good things that are easy to learn, and there are some things that may seem easy to one person, but may actually be difficult for someone else like riding a bike or writing a poem. Someone who is athletic and has good balance might pick up riding a bike within a few minutes. For others, learning to ride a bike takes time, patience, and a series of steps from using a tricycle, to trying to balance once the training wheels come off, to learning to correct for balance while moving at a slow speed until they get the hang of it. Writing a poem may seem easy to someone who is creative and already enjoys writing, but for someone who isn't confident in their ability to think creatively, the idea of writing a poem is daunting and unreasonable. They may even ask, "Why can't I write an essay instead; they're so much easier!" So, we can't say that only difficult tasks are worthwhile because its impossible to define what is difficult or what is easy for everyone.



Addressing the Prompt

Giving relevant examples

Concludes Response

Work Cited

Learning Express Skill Builder in Focus Writing Team.
501 Writing Prompts, Learning Express, 2003, <https://www.misd.net/languageart/grammarinaction/501writingprompts.pdf>

Notes:
