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***The Pennsylvania  
System of School Assessment***

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***Writing  
Assessment  
Released  
Writing Prompts***

***Pennsylvania Department of Education  
Division of Evaluation and Reports***

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## INTRODUCTION

The *Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA)* uses a school-based assessment system that provides comparative data to schools and districts for use in planning and informing the public. In the 2001-2002 school year, regulation provides for individual student scores to be reported for Writing, Reading, and Mathematics assessments as the PSSA emphasizes a system for increased student accountability.

This publication catalogues every prompt that has been field tested since the 1998–1999 Assessment. It is intended as an aid for teachers to prepare their students for the writing portion of the PSSA. *The Pennsylvania Literacy Framework PCRFP III*—Spring 2001 can also assist classroom teachers in instructional methods and techniques that support and enhance the writing process underlying the assessment. Assessment handbooks are available for writing, mathematics and reading. One copy of each of these documents can be obtained by sending a mailing label to:

Pennsylvania Department of Education  
Division of Evaluation and Reports  
333 Market Street, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
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Or they can be downloaded or printed from the PDE Web site: <http://www.pde.state.pa.us>.

## MODES OF WRITING

The Writing Assessment Advisory Committee (WAAC) identified three “modes” or types of writing to be among the most important in school and in life, and to be most appropriate for the state assessment.

### **Informational Writing**

Informational writing is used to share knowledge and convey messages, instructions or ideas by making connections between the familiar and unfamiliar. It is assessed because it is used as a common writing strategy in academic, personal and job-related areas; as a tool that spans a range of thinking skills from recall to analysis and evaluation, and as a means of presenting information in prose. This type of writing has many functions: *to present information through reporting, explaining, directing, summarizing and defining; to organize and analyze information through explaining, comparing, contrasting and relating cause/effect, or to evaluate information through judging, ranking or deciding.*

### **Narrative Writing**

Narrative writing relates a series of events of an actual occurrence or a proposed occurrence at a particular time and in a particular place. It requires writers to closely observe, explore and reflect upon a wide range of experiences. At all grade levels, the functions of this mode of writing are to *narrate or reminisce.*

### **Persuasive Writing**

Persuasive writing moves the reader to take an action or to form or change an opinion. This type of writing is assessed for three reasons: 1) it requires thinking skills such as analysis, synthesis and evaluation; 2) it requires writers to choose from a variety of situations and to take a stand, and 3) it is a skill frequently used in school and the workplace. Persuasive writing has several functions: *to state and support a position, opinion or issue, or to defend, to refute or to argue.*

## THE WRITING PROMPTS

One of the most critical tasks in the design of the writing assessment is the development of the writing prompts. A **prompt** is a statement or group of statements about a specific topic, constructed to motivate students' thoughts and elicit their best writing on the topic. Prompts that specify the purpose and audience have been developed to elicit the mode of writing required. Before prompts are used in an assessment, they are field tested to ensure that they are fair to all students. All the prompts in this handbook have been field tested. Although these prompts were field tested and released at one grade level, they may be appropriate for more than one grade level.

In the assessment, the prompts have a common set of directions that can be read by the test administrator as the students read along silently. Following each prompt is a set of five guideline statements. Each statement refers directly to one of the five domains that correspond to the *characteristics of effective writing*. These statements are designed to assist students by making assessment expectations known.

The assessment directions and guideline statements are not reproduced in this handbook. The *Pennsylvania Writing Assessment Domain Scoring Guide* is reproduced on the next page.

## PENNSYLVANIA WRITING ASSESSMENT DOMAIN SCORING GUIDE

	<b>FOCUS</b>	<b>CONTENT</b>	<b>ORGANIZATION</b>	<b>STYLE</b>	<b>CONVENTIONS</b>
	<i>The single controlling point made with an awareness of task (mode) about a specific topic.</i>	<i>The presence of ideas developed through facts, examples, anecdotes, details, opinions, statistics, reasons and/or explanations.</i>	<i>The order developed and sustained within and across paragraphs using transitional devices including introduction and conclusion.</i>	<i>The choice, use and arrangement of words and sentence structures that create tone and voice.</i>	<i>The use of grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage and sentence formation.</i>
<b>4</b>	Sharp, distinct controlling point made about a single topic with evident awareness of task (mode)	Substantial, specific and/or illustrative content demonstrating strong development and sophisticated ideas	Sophisticated arrangement of content with evident and/or subtle transitions	Precise, illustrative use of a variety of words and sentence structures to create consistent writer’s voice and tone appropriate to audience	Evident control of grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage and sentence formation
<b>3</b>	Apparent point made about a single topic with sufficient awareness of task (mode)	Sufficiently developed content with adequate elaboration or explanation	Functional arrangement of content that sustains a logical order with some evidence of transitions	Generic use of a variety of words and sentence structures that may or may not create writer’s voice and tone appropriate to audience	Sufficient control of grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage and sentence formation
<b>2</b>	No apparent point but evidence of a specific topic	Limited content with inadequate elaboration or explanation	Confused or inconsistent arrangement of content with or without attempts at transition	Limited word choice and control of sentence structures that inhibit voice and tone	Limited control of grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage and sentence formation
<b>1</b>	Minimal evidence of a topic	Superficial and/or minimal content	Minimal control of content arrangement	Minimal variety in word choice and minimal control of sentence structures	Minimal control of grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage and sentence formation

	<b>NON-SCORABLE</b>	<b>OFF-PROMPT</b>
<b>0</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is illegible; i.e., includes so many indecipherable words that no sense can be made of the response</li> <li>• Is incoherent; i.e., words are legible but syntax is so garbled that response makes no sense</li> <li>• Is insufficient; i.e., does not include enough to assess domains adequately</li> <li>• Is a blank paper</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is readable but did not respond to prompt</li> </ul>



## *Grade 6 Writing Prompts*

## INFORMATIONAL GRADE 6

Each season—spring, summer, fall or winter—offers special sights and sounds.

Select one season and describe its unique qualities.



Identify an activity, such as a hobby, pastime or sport, you enjoy or do well.

Explain what you do and why you chose the activity.



Consider all the animals that could be pets.

Select one that would make a good pet and explain why.



Select a person that you would invite to speak to your class.

Explain why you would enjoy that speaker.



Choose what you think would be the best job for you when you become an adult.

Explain why that would be the best choice.



Most people have a special day that they enjoy. It can be a holiday, a birthday or a day of the week such as Friday or Saturday. What day is special to you?

Write to explain why your special day is enjoyable for you.



Jesse Jackson once said, “Your children need your presence more than your presents.”

Explain what this quotation means to you.



We all have a hero or heroine—a person whose qualities, achievements or lifestyle we admire. Choose a person you consider to be your hero or heroine.

Write to explain why this person is your hero or heroine.



You have an opportunity to relive a time from last year. This time could be a happy event, or it could be an event that you would like to change.

Write why you want to relive this event.



Each class must take a science or social studies field trip. Choose a place you would like to go for a field trip. Why will your choice be a good place to visit and what will you learn?

Write to explain what makes your choice a good place to visit for a science or social studies field trip. Also explain what you hope to learn from the trip.



Think of someone whom you look up to or admire. What do you admire about that person? Why has this person influenced you?

Write to explain what qualities you admire about this person and tell why he/she has influenced you.



A new student from a faraway place has enrolled in the sixth grade at your school. How can this student become successful? Why will these actions make him or her successful?

Write an essay explaining how this new student can become a successful sixth grader.



Think about different weather conditions such as snow, rain, heat, cold, and wind. What one specific weather condition affects you the most? Why?

Write an essay explaining the effects of this weather condition.



Many people believe that we “...appreciate something that we earn more than something we are given.”

Explain to your classmates why this statement is true and tell how it might relate to them.



The school district has a policy of “no backpacks” in the school’s classrooms. Many students feel this is very difficult.

Write to the principal to explain the difficulties for a student with the policy of “no backpacks” and explain the reasons for these difficulties.



It is very important for a sixth grader to be organized in school.

Explain to a younger student how to be organized and tell why being organized is important for a student.



There is a room available in your school. What suggestions do you have for the use of this room?

Explain the use of the room and the benefit to the students.

## NARRATIVE GRADE 6

You are a designer for a company that creates rides for carnivals, fairs and amusement parks.

Describe the ride you designed and explain why people would like it.



You are a pair of shoes. You may be any kind of footwear.

Describe yourself in detail and tell about your most memorable experience.



You are shipwrecked on an island for a month with only your backpack.

Tell how you survive with the items in your backpack.



Your teacher comes into the room and places a book on the desk. The book begins to move.

Write about what adventure occurs when the book is opened and tell what you learn from this adventure.



You can fly.

Write about an adventure you had when you were flying and tell what you learned from this adventure.



At different times in their lives, people face situations in which they need to be brave.

Write about a time when someone needed to be brave and tell why bravery was needed.



You lived in an earlier time.

Write about your experience when you lived in an earlier time and tell why it was exciting.



Every clock in your town ran backwards for twenty-four hours.

Write about the adventures resulting from how your “backwards day” was different from a normal day.



It is always fun to visit a zoo, but did you ever think about what the animals do when the zoo is closed? You are in the zoo after it closes.

Write about what you see and learn when the zookeeper forgets to lock the cages.



Think of a time when you did something nice for someone else. What did this experience teach you about yourself?

Write a narrative about doing something nice for someone.



Learning a new skill, such as painting a picture, playing an instrument, or riding a skateboard can be challenging. Think of a time when you learned a new skill or taught someone else a new skill. What happened? Why was this experience a challenge to you?

Write a narrative about learning or teaching a new skill.



Most people can remember a day or event in their lives that they would like to relive. Think about a particular time that you would like to relive. What happened? Why would you like to relive it?

Write a narrative about a day or event you would like to relive.



All of us have favorite stories and especially favorite characters within those stories. What would happen if your favorite character visited your class for a day? What would you remember most about this adventure?

Write a narrative about an adventure at your school with your favorite character.



Photographs often remind us of special people or events that we might have forgotten.

Write the story of a photograph for your family and tell why the photo holds a special memory for you.



You are a yellow school bus that can take a group of young people anywhere.

Write a story for the teacher about the journey that you take, and tell what part of the trip the children enjoyed the most.



You appreciate something that you have to earn more than something you are given.

Tell a story to your class about a time when you had to work hard to earn something and tell why it was important to you.



You have decided to give a favorite possession to charity.

Tell a story about the time when you gave this possession to charity and tell why the charity would be willing to accept it.

## PERSUASIVE GRADE 6

You have chosen an excellent book for sixth graders.

Persuade your classmates to read this book.



Many public places do not permit skateboarding/bicycling/rollerblading. Do you agree or disagree with this rule?

Write to persuade community leaders to support your opinion.



Your class is having a snack on Friday afternoon.

Choose your favorite snack food and write to persuade your classmates why your choice should be served.



Many boys and girls enjoy playing the same sport. Do you think boys and girls should be on the same team?

Write to persuade the coach to agree with your opinion.



Your school district is considering a rule that students may not carry backpacks to school. Do you agree **or** disagree?

Write to persuade your principal to support your opinion.



Eating the proper foods is very important in order to stay healthy. Often, young people like to eat junk foods and they do not eat healthy fruits and vegetables.

Write to persuade your friends that a balanced diet is important in staying healthy.



An elementary school principal has considered canceling recess for grades one through four so children will spend more time in the classroom. The principal wants to know how older students feel about this suggestion. Do you agree **or** disagree with this idea? Do you think that canceling recess is a good idea?

Write to persuade the principal to accept your views on this issue.



You have just learned that your favorite television show is being taken off the air.

Write to persuade the broadcaster to keep your favorite show on the air.



Your principal wants all children to share in keeping the school neat and clean. Students will be asked to spend one hour each week doing clean-up work. Do you agree **or** disagree with the idea?

Write to persuade the principal to consider your opinion.



Some people believe that competitive sports—baseball, volleyball, softball, and basketball—can be helpful to elementary school students. The principal is considering adding competitive sports in elementary school. Do you agree or disagree?

Write an essay persuading the principal to support your opinion that competitive sports should **or** should not be added to the elementary school program.



Your school is considering charging students a fee for participating in after-school activities. Do you agree **or** disagree?

Write an essay persuading your principal that a fee should **or** should not be charged for after-school activities.



You have thirty minutes of free time in school each week. Your teacher has asked your class to suggest ways to use this free time. Think of a way to use this free time. Why is your idea the best one?

Write an essay persuading your teacher to accept your idea on how this free time should be spent.



Your community is searching for a student to send to the capitol to represent the young people of your town. Choose someone you feel is a good student leader.

Persuade your community to agree with your choice.



Many boys and girls play the same sports. Is it a good idea **or** not to have boys and girls on the same team?

Convince the coach of one particular sport in which boys and girls should **or** should not be on the same team.



The school district is reconsidering the “policy on backpacks” in the school’s classrooms. Decide whether backpacks should **or** should not be allowed in the school’s classrooms.

Persuade the principal to agree with your decision.



## *Grade 9 Writing Prompts*

## INFORMATIONAL GRADE 9

High school is the time when some students begin to look for part-time employment.

What is a good part-time job for someone your age? Why would this job be appropriate for a teenager?



Identify an activity, such as a hobby, pastime or sport, you enjoy or do well.

Explain what you do and why you chose the activity.



Many people seem to be concerned about violence.

Write suggestions you may have to stop violence and tell why you think they may work.



Think about someone you admire.

Write to explain the admirable qualities that this person has.



Each student in your school has decided to volunteer forty hours of time to improve the community.

Explain what work you would do and tell how this work would make a difference in your community.



Your school has just hired several new substitute teachers. The principal has asked each student for a suggestion that will help the substitutes succeed.

Write to inform the new substitutes about the most important thing they must do to be successful in your school.



Most of us have all of our senses: sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste. Think about the role each of these senses plays in your life. Which of your senses would be most difficult to live without?

Write to explain to your reader why it would be most difficult to live without this one sense.



Everyone is an expert at something. Some people are experts at making things while other people are experts at doing things. Think about something that you make or do well.

Explain why you are an expert.



Think about inventions that have affected our lives.

Select one invention and write to explain why this invention has been good or bad for society.



“Dress for success” means different things to different people. Why does it matter how a person dresses?

Write an essay explaining what “dress for success” means to you.



All of us have favorite people in our lives. We tend to like them because of specific qualities they have or because of specific things they have done. Why has one person you know become one of the favorite people in your life?

Write an essay explaining the qualities and interests that make you like this person.



Nothing ever stays exactly the same. Think of a person, place, or thing that is an example of this idea. Think about what someone, someplace or something was like in the past and how differences now exist. How has this change affected you?

Write an essay explaining how this person, place or thing has changed.



Among all our possessions, we usually consider one or two objects to be very precious. Choose one possession that is very precious to you. Why is it precious to you?

Write an essay explaining this precious object and its meaning to you.



You are creating a menu to serve to your friends for a special occasion.

Recommend your menu; tell why you made the choices you made. Also explain how you will effectively present this meal to your friends.



If you could have given advice to a well-known historical figure, who would that figure be, and what advice would you give.

Write an essay identifying the historical figure and developing the specific advice.



Students in Pennsylvania are being taught to recycle, renew and reuse.

Explain what students your age can do to benefit the environment by recycling, renewing and reusing materials.



From kitchen appliances, to computers, to entertainment, to communication – technological innovations have affected everyone.

Identify one advancement in technology that you could not do without and explain why.



Technology is replacing many jobs today. Identify a job that is unlikely to be replaced by technology.

Write an essay to explain why a person would be needed to perform the job.

## NARRATIVE GRADE 9

You can probably remember a time when you or someone else tried to prepare food.

Tell a story about a time when the experience was a complete success or a total disaster.



You are a pair of shoes. You may be any kind of footwear.

Describe yourself in detail and tell about your most memorable experience.



You are shipwrecked on an island for a month with only your backpack.

Tell how you survive with the items in your backpack.



Think about an experience that taught you an important lesson.

Write about an experience that taught you an important lesson.



Each year, students experience a first day and a last day of school.

Write about a memorable first or last day of school and why it was memorable.



You have just won a contest in which you get to spend a day with a famous person.

Write about what you did, and what you learned during this day.



All of us have favorite people in our lives. We like them because of specific experiences we have had with them. Select an individual you consider to be a favorite person with whom you have had a special experience.

Write about an experience you have had with this favorite person and show how this experience has made this person one of your favorite people.



You borrow an article of clothing from someone for a special occasion. Much to your horror, disaster strikes, and you ruin the borrowed item.

Write about what happened and why you handled the situation the way you did.



Most people have strong feelings about something that has happened to them. Think about a time when you felt happy, scared, excited or surprised. Think about what happened that made you feel this way.

Write about an experience and why it caused such strong feelings.



You have taken a trip in a time machine that carried you fifteen years into the future. How will you be different in fifteen years than you are now?

Write a narrative about the changes that will have occurred in your life fifteen years from now.



Some people believe that we can survive as long as we keep our self-respect. Think of a situation that could demonstrate the truth of this belief. What could happen to test a person's self-respect? Why is self-respect important?

Write a narrative about someone surviving because they maintained their self-respect.



“New beginnings” can take many forms. For many, a new beginning comes with the start of a new school year. For others, a new beginning could be starting a new sports season, moving to a new home, or changing a habit. How has such a new beginning affected you?

Write a narrative about a time when you experienced a “new beginning.”



As a summer job volunteer, you have been chosen to be a guide at a living history exhibit in an 18th century Pennsylvania community. You are required to tell visitors about your character's life in this community more than 200 years ago. What would you tell them?

Why is your historical life interesting?

Write a narrative about your character living in an 18th century Pennsylvania community.



Some students prefer group work while others like to work alone.

Write a narrative about a time when you found it was better to work alone than to work in a group.



We have often been told to think before we speak.

Tell a story about a time when you thought about **or** failed to think about what you were going to say before you did it.



Most of us have worn an article of clothing that we did not want to wear.

Write a story about a time when this situation happened to you.



Many have said, “It is far easier to start something than it is to finish it.”

Tell a story about a time when you found it easier to start something than to finish it.



Your local TV station or your local newspaper has just hired you.

Write a positive news story to deliver on the evening news or for the evening newspaper.

## PERSUASIVE GRADE 9

*Time* magazine is seeking nominations for “the most influential person of the 20th century.”

Write to persuade the nominating committee that the individual you chose is the best. Tell what contributions and accomplishments this person has made to mankind and the world.



You have been assigned the task of creating a topic for a ninth grade writing test.

Create a prompt and defend why this topic would be interesting and appropriate for ninth grade students.



A foundation has offered to give \$10,000 grants for community projects or charities. You have decided to apply for one of these grants.

Persuade the foundation that your project or charity is worthy of selection.



Your school board is considering extending the school day to 5:00 p.m.

Write to the school board stating your opinion on extending the school day to 5:00 p.m.



A new radio station is going to start broadcasting in your area.

Write to persuade the station owners to play your favorite music.



NASA will select a student to accompany astronauts on their next space flight.

Persuade NASA that either you **or** one of your classmates would be the best choice.



Your community has been awarded money to build a monument in honor of a person. Decide who should receive this honor.

Persuade your community leaders to accept your choice.



Violence is in many television shows. Some adults believe that this television violence contributes to teenagers being violent. Think about whether or not television violence influences teenagers to be violent.

Write to persuade adults to accept your opinion on this issue.



Some state officials want to make the school year longer. Your local newspaper supports this idea. Decide whether you agree or disagree with this idea.

Write to the editor of the newspaper stating your opinion.



Your school is planning to revise its rules. The principal has asked students to identify the best school rules, the ones that should not be changed. Why should one of these rules definitely remain in effect?

Write an essay persuading the principal to keep what you consider the best rule.



A foreign student is considering several American schools to attend. Why would your school be the best choice?

Write an essay persuading the student that he or she should attend your school.



You have a major project due in one of your classes. After talking with several of your classmates, you discover that almost no one in the class will be finished on time. You have been chosen to share this concern with your teacher and ask for an extension. Why should your teacher consider extending the deadline?

Write an essay persuading your teacher to extend the project deadline for the entire class.



“It doesn’t matter if you win or lose—only if you win.” Is winning the only thing that is important to you?

Persuade the reader to agree with your position.



With advancements in technology some students have chosen to go to high school via the Internet. Decide if public education in school buildings and classrooms or Internet education anywhere is best for students.

Write an essay to persuade your reader of your choice.



Many teachers believe that an organized student finds it easier to be successful. Do you agree **or** disagree?

Write an essay that persuades other students to accept your position.



Everyone does something well. During a job interview, you need to convince an employer that you should be hired for a certain job because of your special skill.

Write an essay which details the reasons to convince the employer that you should be hired.



Some people believe that sports are an important part of school life. Others think that there is too much emphasis placed on sports. Which position do you take?

Persuade the reader to accept your position.



## *Grade 11 Writing Prompts*

## INFORMATIONAL GRADE 11

High school students have made the journey from childhood to adolescence and are rapidly approaching adulthood.

What changes have occurred during this journey?



Music is a part of every culture and plays different roles in people's lives.

Tell how music plays a role in American culture or in your own life.



High school students are faced with making decisions about the world of work. Choose a job/career/profession that interests you.

Explain why you might consider it, what preparation you need to pursue it, and what skills you need to be successful.



You and a friend are having a conversation about what makes “popular” students popular. Your friend tells you that being popular is important.

You decide to write an essay sharing your thoughts about popularity and why you think the way you do.



The school district in which you live plans to build a new high school. You have been asked to serve as a student member of the planning committee. What is the single most important feature to include in the new school?

Explain why this must be included in the new high school.



Your social studies class has been studying important events that have made history during your lifetime.

As an assignment, you are to write an essay describing an historical event that has happened during your lifetime — one you will always remember.



The local school board plans to change the school year from ten to twelve months. The school board wants to know what students think about this plan.

Write to inform the school board of how this will affect you personally.



Your local newspaper is publishing a special issue about famous or celebrated people that its readers would like to meet. You have decided to enter an essay about a person you would like to meet.

Write to tell why you want to meet this person based on what this person has accomplished.



All communities or neighborhoods have concerns that affect their residents.

Write about a concern that has affected your community, your neighborhood or you.



In the last 100 years, which technological change has contributed the most to American life? Why?

Write an essay explaining the effects of this twentieth century technological change on American life.



Consider the role automobiles play in American culture. What are the most important effects automobiles have had on American culture? Why?

Write an essay explaining the influence the automobile has had on American culture.



The needs of society are constantly changing. As a young adult, you will soon enter the constantly changing work force. What skills will you need? Why?

Write an essay explaining what skills you will need to succeed in the changing work force.



Your school district plans to build a new high school. Your principal has asked students for suggestions that can be given to the building committee. What important features should be included in the new school? Why?

Write an essay explaining the important features that should be included in the plan for the new high school.



Select a special field of interest to you and explain how and why it will be different thirty years in the future. Some areas you might consider are: technology, fine arts, sports or others.

Write an essay explaining how your area of interest will be different thirty years from now.



Consider the role automobiles play in American culture. What are the most important effects automobiles have had on American culture? Why?

Write an essay explaining the influence the automobile has had on American culture.



As a young adult, you will soon enter the constantly changing work force. What skills will you need to succeed?

Write an essay explaining how you will use these skills to succeed in the changing work force.

## NARRATIVE GRADE 11

Despite changes in color and shape, even today’s fancy sneakers are still passive, “put-them-on, take-them-off” footwear. A shoe company announces that it will hire the winner of an essay contest to determine what creative changes can be made to improve its sneakers.

Write to the shoe company to explain what creative improvements you would make to today’s sneakers.



It has been said that people need to continually overcome obstacles to succeed.

Tell about a time that you had to overcome an obstacle to succeed.



Tell about something that happened in school that taught you a valuable lesson.



Growing up requires making decisions.

Write about a time when you had to make an important decision and what resulted from that decision.



In our culture, a teenager’s getting a driver’s license is a “rite of passage” into adulthood. There are other rites of passage that make teenagers feel “grown up.”

Write about an experience that helped you pass into the world of adulthood.



Many times in life we miss out on things because we are afraid to do them or dread the thoughts of a negative experience. Other times we have no choice and must do what we dread the most. Often we learn that our fears were unjustified.

Write about an experience you dreaded but discovered was not nearly as bad as you had expected.



When Shakespeare said, “Sweet are the uses of adversity,” he meant that sometimes good can come from bad.

Write about an experience you had when something good resulted from something that, at first, seemed bad.



Often we go to others for advice on solving our problems. There are times when their advice should have been taken but was ignored. Think of a time when you were given advice but chose not to take it.

Write about an experience when you asked for advice but chose not to follow the advice given.



It has been said that people learn to appreciate those things that have resulted from hard work.

Write about a personal experience you had that required hard work and taught you to appreciate what you gained from working so hard.



All the world’s technologies have stopped working. How would you react to this situation?

Write a narrative about a day when all of the current technological devices have stopped working.



“So, how was your day at school?” How would you answer this question if it was about either your best or your worst day of school? Why was this your best or worst day at school?

Write a narrative about either your best or your worst day at school.



You have been asked to write to a foreign exchange student about a typical day at your school. This person will spend next year at your school and needs to know what to expect. Why are the events of a typical day meaningful to the exchange student?

Write a narrative about a typical day at your school.



Everyone has a favorite celebrity—a TV or movie star, a politician, or someone from the world of business or education. You have been given the opportunity to spend a day with your favorite celebrity. Why is this a meaningful experience for you?

Write a narrative about a day you spent with your favorite celebrity.



One morning, all of the modern devices in your home stopped working.

Write a narrative about how you coped that day without any modern devices. Include your reactions to the situation.



“So, how was your day at school?” How would you answer this question if it were about either your best or your worst day of school?

Write a narrative about either your best **or** your worst day at school.



You have been asked to write to a new student about a typical day at your school. This person will need to know what to expect.

Write a narrative that would help the new student understand a typical day at your school.

## PERSUASIVE GRADE 11

Scientists are developing a sneaker that will enable athletes to perform better. Though technology affords athletes distinct advantages, people might say that the measure of the contest should be the person rather than the product.

Write to persuade the Olympic Committee to adopt **or** to ban the use of technology-assisted sneakers in international competition.



In a neighboring state, you must be at least 16 years old and a full-time student or possess a high school diploma to obtain a driver's license. If you choose to drop out of school before graduation, the state revokes this privilege. To regain your license, you must return to school to graduate.

Do you believe that a law like this would be a good idea in Pennsylvania? Write to persuade your congressman to adopt **or** to veto this idea for a new law.



Some people think that physical education should no longer be a graduation requirement. Individual school districts may choose to offer the program or to eliminate it as a requirement.

Write to your school board to persuade it to maintain **or** to eliminate the current program.



When you become a senior in high school and begin to plan for your upcoming graduation, you could be asked to join the commencement speaker selection committee. Who would you invite to be the main speaker at your commencement ceremony?

Write an essay to the members of the committee to convince them to accept your nominee for the main speaker.



As a citizen, you agree with some laws and disagree with others. If you could either create a new law or eliminate a current law, what would it be and why?

Write to persuade others why you would create a new law **or** eliminate a current one.



Your best friend is considering dropping out of high school. You think he or she should stay in school and graduate. You have also learned that the dropout rate in your school is higher than you ever imagined.

Write an editorial in the school newspaper to convince all the students to stay in school and graduate.



Your social studies class debated the issue of students working at after-school jobs. You felt so strongly about your ideas that you decided to write an article for the school newspaper.

Write the article to persuade readers to accept your views.



Extracurricular activities are regarded by some people as an important part of a total educational program and by others as of little or no importance. Your school board may eliminate extracurricular activities.

Identify your position and write to persuade the school board to accept your ideas.



Your school district is considering a graduation requirement that will make each student work two hours each week on a community project.

Write to persuade your school board to accept or reject this requirement.



The English Language Arts curriculum is undergoing a change in your school district. The committee in charge will allow the students to select pieces of literature for each course. What piece of literature would you choose? Why?

Write an essay persuading the committee to select the piece of literature that you recommend for the course.



Your school is considering a policy that would limit the amount of homework teachers may assign. Do you agree with this policy? How would it affect your success in high school?

Write an essay persuading the principal to accept your ideas about limiting homework.



Your class is preparing a time capsule for graduation. Only a limited number of items will be selected to place in the capsule. Why does the item that you have chosen represent your generation?

Write an essay persuading the selection committee to accept the item you have chosen.



Your social studies class has studied social problems that face the United States today. These problems range from poverty to illegal drugs. Identify a problem that needs immediate attention. Why should the government help solve this problem?

Write an essay persuading your legislator to work on solving the social problem that you identified.



The English curriculum is undergoing a change in your school district. The committee in charge will allow students to select pieces of literature. What piece of literature would you choose? Why?

Write an essay persuading the committee to select the piece of literature that you recommend for the new curriculum.



Your school is considering a policy that would limit the amount of homework teachers may assign. Do you agree **or** disagree with this policy?

Write an essay persuading the principal to accept your ideas about the homework proposal.



Your class is preparing a time capsule to be opened in fifteen years. Only a limited number of items will be selected to place in the capsule. What would you choose to best represent your generation?

Write an essay persuading the selection committee to accept the item you have chosen.