

ARCHDIOCESE OF CINCINNATI
WRITING SAMPLE -- GRADE 7

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS-PLEASE READ BEFOREHAND

READ AND PREPARE PRIOR TO WRITING DATE (November 16-20, 2009)

1. Once students begin drafting their work, teachers may only answer questions that clarify the directions. They may not help students write, revise, or edit. Teachers may not correct drafts.
 2. Use regular loose leaf paper for the final copy. Write on one side only. Please - no spiral bound paper. Students are encouraged to write two sides to **four sides (maximum)** of loose leaf. Remind students that **longer is not better** if length is simply "filler." Teachers want to read something well written, not something that rambles on!
 3. Use **black or blue ink** for the final copy. Students may print or use cursive, but writing must be legible. **If students regularly use a computer/word processing program for their writing, they may do so for the writing samples. Length should approximate the above. Programs that correct or prompt student revisions should not be used.** (Again, we're looking to see what the student can accomplish on his/her own.)
 4. Students' names and actual school names should **not** appear on the final copy.
 5. Prior to testing, your school will receive a packet of adhesive labels, pre-coded for each student's paper. Use these on the final copies.
 - * the first three numbers are the school code - **please check; this may have changed**
 - labels:** * the next three numbers are the student code
 - the last two numbers are the grade levelIf you need additional labels, follow the above format and simply make your own.
- Place one label on the **top right-hand corner** of each student's first page. **Copy the identification code onto the upper right-hand corner of any additional pages.** (Papers do get separated at times.)
6. **Staple** together all pages of the student's final copy. Please staple the upper **left-hand** corner only. Keep a listing of student names and identification codes (**WRITING SAMPLES, STUDENT ID LIST** form provided) so that you can identify papers when the results come in. **Do not** send that sheet to the scoring.
 8. Because this is a testing situation, all work must be done individually. Students may not draft, revise, or edit in groups or **with teacher help**. All written work must be completed at school, not at home. **Collect student work each day.**
 9. **GIVE ALL PAPERS TO THE PRINCIPAL.** Your school's scorer(s) should bring all papers to the local scoring site on the appointed day. **If your school is not sending a scorer to the session, it is vital that the papers be mailed or delivered to the site for scoring on the appointed day. Be sure to submit the COVER SHEET with the samples.**
 10. Student papers will be returned with the scores. **You must keep a record of student names and numbers in order to identify papers and scores.** (see #6 above) **The form for this is at the end of this file.**
 11. Teachers need to know the prompt as soon as possible. Teachers may read stories to the class before the writing date in order to refer to them in prewriting work. Students, however, are **not** to be given the prompt before Nov. 16, nor should any of the prewriting activities be done before that date.

ARCHDIOCESE OF CINCINNATI, WRITING SAMPLE -- GRADE 7

READ AND PREPARE PRIOR TO WRITING DATES
(November 16-20, 2009)

TEACHER DIRECTIONS

The 7th grade writing sample prompt for the 2009 - 2010 school year:

Life is full of choices. Write about one choice you have made. (This is to be a real and personal choice you have made, not something imaginary or in the future)

Teachers familiar with your grade level will be reading your papers.

NOTE TO TEACHERS:

Students should write about a personal choice they have made, something they decided to do, something they purchased, a gift they gave to someone, a team or group they chose to join, a choice to befriend someone, to help someone, etc. It should **not** be a decision made by the family as a whole (to go to Disney World for vacation) or a choice made for them (to go to a particular school, etc.).

In developing the prompt, students might write about why they made that choice, what they considered in deciding as they did, the results of their choice, how it might have affected them or others. They **DO NOT** have to respond to all of these suggestions; they are just that - possible ways of developing the topic.

N.B. The prompt asks students to write an original composition. Teachers may put the prompt on the board or reproduce it for the students. Teachers **MAY NOT** write sample beginning sentences, even student generated ones, on the board for students to use. They may not list what students could/should write to develop the topic, or list sample closing sentences, or indicate to students what comes next in their composition. **The whole idea of a writing sample is to see if the student can organize the piece on his/her own, and develop it appropriately.** Teacher input is limited to prewriting activities and discussion only, but we do encourage teachers to do as many prewriting activities as they can to help students clarify the topic and get ideas for the development of their own writing.

The writing sample incorporates the writing process. Therefore, students will need to prewrite, draft, revise, edit, and prepare a final draft. Teachers are encouraged to talk about the scoring rubric with the students **before** introducing the actual prompt.

TIME IS NOT A FACTOR. Students should probably work for 30-45 minutes during each of the days allotted. Use the time as you need it. Be sure to allow students sufficient time to **COMPLETE** re-copying.

DAY ONE - PREWRITE

Following are several prewriting techniques that may be helpful. Choose the ones that you feel will be the most helpful to your students. Do not feel you must do all of these activities, but it is preferable to do more than one.

1. Discuss: What kinds of choices are you allowed to make? (how to spend your time? money? what friends you choose to go with?) Help students focus on choices **THEY** make, not those made for them.
2. Consider stories you have read or films you have seen in which the main character had to make a choice. What was the choice he/she had to make? What influenced the person's choice? What was

the outcome of that choice? Does anything in their experience relate to your choice?

3. The following texts may be read prior to the writing dates or as part of the prewriting:

Hiding from the Nazis, David Adler

Nothing But the Truth, Avi

The Yellow Star, Carmen Agra Deedy

The Scarlet Stockings Spy, Trinka Hakes Noble

Friend on Freedom River, Gloria Whelan

Alexander, Who Used to Be Rich Last Sunday, Judith Viorst

What choices do the characters make? How do the characters make their choices? What helps them?

4. Students might list the pros and cons of a choice they have made. Why did they make the choice in spite of the “cons”? Did the negative aspects of the choice actually happen after the choice was made? How did they feel about that? Were the positive outcomes worth it?
5. Share a personal experience of a choice you might have made.

DAY TWO - DRAFT

1. Review the prompt with the students. Put it on the board or overhead.
2. From the prewriting experience(s), students should begin to write.
3. Day two is for drafting the piece of writing. Tell students this is **not** the paper they will turn in. The important thing is to get thoughts and ideas on paper.

COLLECT ALL PAPERS AT THE END OF EACH WRITING SESSION

DAYS THREE, FOUR, AND FIVE

REVISE

1. Return the students' drafts.
2. Ask students: (Use overhead or board)
 - a. Did you write about a choice you personally made?
 - b. What details can you add to help the reader better understand and enjoy your paper?
 - c. Is our choice of words and examples appropriate for your audience (teachers)?
 - d. Do you need to rearrange any ideas or details?
 - e. Do you need to take out any information or details that may confuse the reader?
3. Allow time to revise.
4. Remind students of the criteria on which the papers will be scored.

EDIT

1. Give students a copy of the included editing checklist or put it on a transparency. You may go over it orally if that would be helpful.
2. Ask students to look over their papers for those items and to **make any necessary corrections**.
3. Reference materials such as dictionaries, thesauruses, and grammar books may be used.

EDITING CHECKLIST

- _____ 1. Conveys the message of the prompt.
- _____ 2. Includes supporting ideas, details, or examples.
- _____ 3. Follows logical order.
- _____ 4. Has word choice appropriate to the audience, purpose, and topic.
- _____ 5. Has proper punctuation, capitalization, and grammar.
- _____ 6. Contains correct spelling.
- _____ 7. Is legible.
- _____ 8. Composition is titled.

PUBLISH

1. Have students prepare a final copy to turn in for scoring. If hand written, remind them to make the paper as **legible** as possible (individual flourishes in handwriting detract from legibility.). Be sure to allow students sufficient time to **complete** re-copying. **Samples composed on computers/word processors may be submitted as printouts.**
2. Remind them **not** to put their **name or school** on the paper.

Students will need differing amounts of time to revise and edit. This is why three days are allotted to those tasks. Use your own best judgment about pacing the work, but **allow all students time to finish the final copy.**

**PLEASE MAKE SURE THE FINAL PAPERS ARE CODED AND
THAT THE IDENTIFICATION CODE IS COPIED ONTO THE UPPER RIGHT-HAND CORNER
OF ANY ADDITIONAL PAGES. STAPLE ALL PAGES TOGETHER.**

Print the following page and include it with the writing samples. ALL SAMPLES FROM ONE SCHOOL SHOULD BE SUBMITTED TOGETHER.

Student Identification List form follows the cover page. Keep the Student ID List for your own use.

ARCHDIOCESE OF CINCINNATI

WRITING SAMPLE - **GRADE 7**

**RETURN THIS COVER SHEET WITH
SEVENTH GRADE PAPERS**

School _____

Address _____

Phone # _____

School Writing Sample Code # _____

List **first** 8-digit code number used: _____

List **last** 8-digit code number used: _____

Please list any numbers **in between** that are **NOT** included with these samples:

(person completing form or contact person)

