

Formal Writing Prompts

for English-Language Arts Grades 11-14

These writing prompts are a gift to Writing Points subscribers from You-Can-Teach-Writing.com

You may

- Use them in classes you teach.
- Make copies for your students.
- Adapt or modify the prompts as you wish.

At the corresponding web page, you will find [supporting information for these prompts](#), including how to raise/lower the prompt difficulty. You can also read and download [thesis statements for responses to these prompts](#).

To make it easy for you to use the prompts, you can cut and paste from a [text file](#) containing only the prompts. I ask that you do not post the writing prompts to blogs, website, and other public forums outside your class.

If you use or adapt these materials for your classes, the courtesy of an acknowledgment would be most appreciated. You can even share how you used a prompt in the [writing prompts teachers forum](#).

Grammatical word functions

In English grammar, all words fall into one of eight parts of speech depending on how they function in a particular sentence. Some students are really confused by the idea that a word may not always be the same part of speech in every sentence.

Write an essay explaining the concept of parts of speech (word functions) in English grammar so the concept makes sense to other students.

- Use an analogy to something readers already understand to explain the concept.
- Further illustrate the concept with examples of words that are different parts of speech in different sentences.

For maximum credit on this essay you must:

- Provide at least two examples of words that can have more than one grammatical function depending on the way they are used.
- Write one original full-sentence example of each function the word can have. You may consult sources for help in understanding the concept of grammatical word functions, but you must write your own examples.
- Craft an analogy which has at least two points of similarity to grammatical functions of a word.
- Meet all other standard writing requirements for this class.

Your essay will probably be four or five paragraphs. Please keep it to fewer than 500 words. A clear, precise explanation is much better than a vague, rambling one.

Passive voice

Almost every English textbook tells you to write in active voice. That is usually good advice; however, there are times when using passive voice is more appropriate.

Write an essay explaining three situations in which using passive voice is preferable to using active voice.

You *may* use one or more of the following three ways of developing your explanation of a situation in which passive voice is preferable to active voice:

- ➔ Refer to situations or circumstances in which passive voice makes more sense.
- ➔ Refer to actual examples of pass voice use in published sources. (If you use this option, you may quote no more than one complete sentence and must clearly identify where the information comes from so that someone else can read the entire item.)
- ➔ Create two versions of a fictional example (one in passive voice, the other in active voice) to use as your examples.

For maximum credit on this essay you must:

- ➔ Define *passive voice* in your own words.
- ➔ For each example you use, whether real or fictitious, explain how the impact of the example would change if the voice were changed.
- ➔ Meet all other standard writing requirements for this class.

Please keep your entire essay to fewer than 600 words. If you are writing your own examples, you may need to edit them severely to keep your essay from running too long.

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