

Gorman Learning Center Writing Program Grade 6

Each prompt has a code. For example, the first narrative prompt code is N6A. Please record the proper code on your essay to identify the chosen prompt when submitting it to the Writing Program. The top corner of the paper should include the following information:

Student Name
Teacher (IST) Name
Date
Grade Level
Prompt Code

We recommend that submissions be typed, double-spaced, in 12-point Times New Roman font.

Self-assessment (1 total)

The self-assessment prompt should be done at the beginning of the school year.

S6A: *Write a reflection on your writing strengths and weaknesses.*

Consider the Portfolio that you completed in the spring. Carefully read over the Evaluator Narrative that you received back from the Writing Program. Keeping the evaluator's letter in mind, write a reflection on your writing. Describe your strengths as a writer and explain how those strengths help you to write effectively. Also, describe your weaknesses as a writer, and explain what you think you can do to improve them. (Remember, writing is more than just spelling and grammar; try to think about the global aspects of writing, such as the use of specific details to help develop your ideas, paragraphing and organization, awareness of your audience, or construction of strong introductions and conclusions.) How do you hope to grow as a writer? What do you hope to accomplish in your writing this year? What steps will you take to become a better writer?

Narrative (3 total)

N6A: *Write a suspense story.*

Write a narrative piece from the first-person point of view about a few characters in a remote and possibly scary setting. Develop your plot to show why the characters are in this place, what happens while they are there, and how they are able to leave. Create details in the setting and dialogue among the characters to create a feeling of suspense.

N6B: *Write a story about a friend in a time of need.*

Write a story from the third-person point of view about a group of friends, one of whom needs help after an accident. Use sensory details and concrete language to develop the plot and the characters. Establish a specific setting, integrate dialogue, and add suspenseful elements.

N6C: *Write a story based on a painting or photograph.*

Find a painting or photograph that sparks your imagination. Then, using the painting or photograph as inspiration, write the story “behind” the photograph. Use your imagination and lots of details to develop a plot, setting, and characters. (When submitting the story to the Writing Program, include a photocopy of the painting or photograph, as well.)

Expository/Compare & Contrast (3 total)

E6A: *Write a composition on your style choices.*

Write a composition in which you explore your choices of clothing, hairstyle, or jewelry and how those choices represent your attitude and taste. Compare and contrast your choices with those of your friends and family. Also, you may compare and contrast your present style with your style when you were younger. Conclude your composition with a paragraph in which you reflect on your style and style in general. How important do you think style is?

E6B: *Write a composition on a talent or gift that you have.*

Write a composition in which you introduce and explain a special talent or gift. Describe your gift or talent. Tell how you developed it. Explain how the gift or talent enhances the quality of your life and the lives of those with whom you share it.

E6C: *Write a composition on two activities that you enjoy.*

Choose two different activities that you enjoy. Write a composition in which you describe the two activities. Explain in detail what these two activities are all about and why you enjoy them. Compare and contrast the two activities: What similarities and differences exist between them?

Response to Literature (2 total)

For suggestions of books to read and ideas for responding to literature, be sure to check out the new “Best Book Choices for Sixth to Eighth Grade” and “Reader’s Guide to Author’s Techniques” on the Gorman Writing Program website!

L6A: *Write a composition on a novel with a historical setting.*

Pick a book that is set in a different time and place, and write a paper in which you compare that book’s historical setting with the present day. Give a *brief* summary of the book, but make sure that your essay is mostly about your ideas and interpretation of the historical setting. Some questions to consider: What did you learn from the book? Do you think the author did a good job of portraying the historical setting? Why or why not? Do you think that the issues the characters in the story face are similar to any issues that modern-day people face? Be sure to use specific examples from the book to support your interpretation of the historical setting.

L6B: *Write a composition about the theme of a book.*

Choose a book that you think has an important message, lesson, or underlying meaning (this can be considered the *theme* of the book). Then, write a paper in which you clearly

state what you think the theme is, and explore how that theme is presented in the book. Give a *brief* summary of the book, but make sure that your essay is mostly about your interpretation of the book's theme. What does the book mean to you? What did it teach you? What techniques does the author use to get the theme across? Be sure to use specific examples, such as quotes, scenes, and characters, from the book to support your interpretation of the theme.

Persuasive Writing (2 total)

P6A: *Write a persuasive letter to the Governor of California.*

Find an issue in your state that matters to you. (To get an idea, you might look in the newspaper.) Learn about the issue by reading whatever you can find about it and talking to family, friends, or neighbors to see what they think about the issue. Then, decide what you believe should be done about the issue, and write a letter to the Governor in which you state your position and support it with evidence. Be sure to clearly state your position, and to consider and address the various sides of the issue. (Discuss the opposing viewpoint as well as your own). As well as submitting this letter to the Writing Program, we encourage you to send it to the Governor!

P6B: *Write a composition about a place outside of the U.S. that you would like to visit.*

Choose a destination outside of the U.S. where you'd like to visit. Write a composition in which you convince your parents or guardians that your destination is the right choice. Discuss your reasons for wanting to go there, explain the benefits, and describe the activities involved. Make an argument that your choice would be safe, worthwhile, and good for you. Support your arguments with relevant details and be sure to address the concerns and opposing arguments of your parents or guardians.

(Note: P6B and R6A complement each other; we recommend doing R6A first, and then P6B.)

Research (2 total)

R6A: *Write a research paper on a place outside of the U.S.*

Choose a place outside of the U.S. that interests you and research the historical, political, cultural, and social structures of that place. The place you choose may be a country or a specific place within a country, such as a city or state. Find information from multiple sources (such as books, websites, and periodicals). Then, write a paper about that place, including the important facts and details that you discovered in your research. Be sure to put the information into your own words and include a bibliography. For information on bibliography format, see the bibliography format link on Gorman's webpage.

R6B: *Write a research paper exploring a specific issue in the world.*

Choose an issue of worldwide interest that involves the need for different countries to make changes, such as climate change or immigration. Narrow your focus to a manageable size and do your research on a specific area. (For example, instead of global warming in general, narrow your research to the Kyoto Protocol. Or, instead of

immigration in general, narrow your research to immigration along the California and Mexico border.) Research the topic, gathering facts and information from multiple and reliable sources (such as websites, public speeches, periodicals, and reference books). In your research paper, explain the background of the topic, identify the different sides of the issue, and identify specific changes that could be made to have a positive effect on the issue. As you write about the issue, use the facts, examples, and explanations from your research. Be sure to put the information into your own words and include a bibliography. For information on bibliography format, see the bibliography format link on Gorman's webpage.

Revision (1 total)

V6A: *Revise an essay you have already submitted for evaluation to make it as strong as possible.*

Choose an essay that you have already submitted to the Writing Program. Consider the evaluator's comments and feedback. Then, re-read your essay, thinking about what you could change and revise to make the essay stronger. Remember, revising an essay does not only mean "fixing" the mistakes. Think about other things you could do to make the essay better, as well. For example, perhaps the essay needs to be organized into paragraphs, perhaps it is missing an introduction, or perhaps it needs more descriptive details. Each essay will be different. You should respond to the evaluator's comments, but also make choices based on changes *you* want to make.

After revising the essay, write a "reflection" of at least two paragraphs about what you changed, explaining why you revised as you did. Include your reflection (on a separate piece of paper) with the revision when submitting it to the Writing Program. ***Also, when submitting your revision to the Writing Program, be sure to include a copy of the original essay along with the evaluator's comment and suggestions and rubric, so that we can see what you changed. Revisions submitted without a copy of the original essay and evaluation will be returned unevaluated.***

Portfolio (to be submitted in May):

In May, you will submit a Portfolio of your writing. For information on what the Portfolio entails, check out the Portfolio link on Gorman's webpage.