

Gorman Learning Center Writing Program Grade 7

Each prompt has a code. For example, the first narrative prompt code is N7A. 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.

One-Draft Writing (1 single-sitting essay)

The One-Draft Writing should be submitted in the first or second submission period (before the state-test occurs).

In seventh grade, California requires that you complete a writing test in the spring. Therefore, this prompt is practice for your test. You will be asked to write in one of four modes (narrative, summary, response to literature, or persuasive). You will respond to the prompt in one sitting. You will not see the actual prompt until you sit down to write the essay. Please arrange with your teacher to do the one-draft practice prompt.

You are required to complete one one-draft prompt; however, you are encouraged to submit up to four (one for each mode you may encounter on the test).

Self-assessment (1 total)

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

S7A: *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 (2 total)

N7A: *Write a story about being in a different family from your own.*

Write a narrative composition from the first-person point of view, in which you wake up one morning to find yourself in a completely different family, and they treat you as if you were one of them. Create a good plot line, using well-developed characters; dialogue; specific time and place; and strategies such as gestures, tone of voice, actions, facial expressions, and details to make your story strong.

N7B: *Write a story about friends facing a conflict.*

Imagine friends who are facing a conflict. Write a story about this conflict from the first-person point of view, following the standard plot line of beginning, exposition, conflict, rising action, climax, and denouement. Develop major and minor characters and use sensory details to create a vivid setting. Use the strategies of dialogue; suspense; and descriptions of movement, gestures, and facial expressions to convey narrative action.

Expository (3 total)

E7A: *Write a composition in which you describe different moods in the same setting.*

Describe your room at the brightest time of day and, in contrast, at the moment after dusk when it is full of shadows. Include details and vivid language to evoke the mood you feel in the room at each time. Describe the look of the room, but avoid simply listing the objects in your room. Concentrate on mood, feeling, and poetic language (such as similes, metaphors, and other figures of speech) to convey how the room looks.

E7B: *Write a letter in which you describe a California beach.*

Write a letter to a person who has never been to a California beach, in which you describe a California beach to him or her. Be very detailed and specific, painting a picture in words to show what a California beach is like. Try to appeal to all of the senses to convey the essence of the beach; for example, you may describe the feel and texture of the sand and water, the effect of the waves and the wind, and the activities one does at the beach.

E7C: *Write an expository email.*

Find a website on the Internet that interests you. Then, write an email to someone at that website, in which you introduce yourself and explain why you are writing. (To decide whom to contact within a website, there is usually a “Contact” button; you may write to a specific person within the organization, or you may write to the webmaster.) Decide what you want to write in your email. Perhaps you want to find more information about something on the website, or perhaps you have a comment about something you read on the site. In your email, be sure to clearly explain why you are writing (your purpose). As well as submitting this prompt to the Writing Program, we encourage you to send the email!

Summary (1 total)

WHEN SUBMITTING YOUR SUMMARY TO THE WRITING PROGRAM FOR EVALUATION, BE SURE TO INCLUDE A COPY OF THE ORIGINAL ARTICLE. SUMMARY PROMPTS SUBMITTED WITHOUT A COPY OF THE ORIGINAL ARTICLE WILL BE RETURNED UNEVALUATED.

Z7A: *Write a summary of an informative article.*

Choose an article from a newspaper, periodical, or an online source. Then, write a summary of the article. Use your own words to convey the main idea of the article. Identify and include in your summary the most important details that support the article's main idea. You may wish to comment on the context of the article, as well: how does the article relate to a larger discussion of the topic at hand?

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!

L7A: *Write about the differences between one likable antagonist and one unredeemable villain.*

From a story or novel you have read, choose an antagonist or “bad guy” who has complex characteristics which make him or her likable. Write an analysis of the likable character in contrast with a villain who has no redeeming characteristics. Explain the differences between them. Examine which character is more realistic and more fully developed. Analyze the devices (such as description, dialogue, and actions) that the author uses to portray the characters. Remember to give a *brief* summary of the story, but to focus your paper on your analysis of the two characters.

L7B: *Write an analysis of the changes that a character goes through in a novel.*

It is often said that the main character, or protagonist, of a novel must go through a journey (physical or mental) through the course of a book. Choose a character in a novel who goes through such a journey, and write a paper in which you analyze the changes the character goes through in the course of the book. Some questions to consider: How is the character different at the end of the book? What events in the book made the character change as she or he did? What can you learn from the changes that the character went through? What techniques did the author use to show those changes in the character? Be sure to use specific details and textual examples to show how the character changed. Remember to give a *brief* summary of the story, but to focus your paper on your analysis of the character's changes.

Persuasive Writing (2 total)

P7A: *Write a letter to your best friend persuading him or her not to go against his or her parents' or guardians' wishes.*

Imagine that your best friend has decided to do something that his or her parents have forbidden, and that now your friend wants you to help him or her avoid getting caught. Write your friend a letter explaining why you won't participate, and attempt to persuade your friend from continuing to disobey his or her parents. Provide reasoned, logical points to your arguments, as well as emotional appeals. Address your friend's reasons for doing what he or she is planning to do, and develop your letter with good explanations.

P7B: *Write a persuasive letter to the President of the U.S.*

Find an issue of national importance 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 President in which you state your position and support it with evidence. Be sure to clearly state your position, and to consider the various sides of the issue. As well as submitting this letter to the Writing Program, we encourage you to send it to the President!

Research Writing (2 total)

Note: R7A is a prompt intended to help students organize research for R7B. Although here it is specific to R7B, the prompt of writing an annotated bibliography could also be used for any research topic.

R7A: *Write an annotated bibliography.*

Choose a specific time and place in history and research the cultural, social, political, or economic structures that existed and their effects on the people of that time and place. Find five or more sources of information on that time and place. Then, use those sources to write an annotated bibliography. In your annotated bibliography, list each source in correct bibliography format (see the bibliography format link on Gorman's webpage). Then, under each source (or entry) of your bibliography, write a paragraph in which you summarize the source in one to two sentences, describe what you thought about that source, and explain how you think it will be useful to you when you write your research paper. Include at least five sources in your annotated bibliography (at least one book, one periodical, and one online source).

R7B: *Use your annotated bibliography (see R7A) to write a research paper on the social, political, cultural or economic structures of a certain time and place.*

Re-read your annotated bibliography (R7A) and narrow down your research topic to a very specific question or statement. Write a research paper in which you fully answer the question or statement and present a complete understanding of the topic you have chosen. Include citations and a bibliography. For information on documentation format, see the Documentation Format link on Gorman's webpage.

Example: If you are interested in the values, social customs, and traditions of medieval Japan, you might write your research paper on how the warrior code of 12th-century Samurai influenced Japanese society then and today. Your question might be whether the physical and mental discipline of medieval Samurai is still practiced by people in the modern world.

Revision (1 total)

V7A: *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.