

## **Explanatory Writing**

### **The Writing Prompt**

The purpose of explanatory writing is to share knowledge and ideas. This type of writing prompt asks you to share your personal knowledge and ideas by explaining a situation or a quotation.

### **How to Respond to an Explanatory Writing Prompt**

When responding to this type of prompt, explain how you can relate the situation or the quotation to you and your life. Be sure to choose a personal experience that relates directly to the prompt. Your experience should be important to you and connect to your audience. It should also be one that you remember well as you will need to include many details in your writing.

### **Strategy for Responding to Explanatory Writing Prompts**

#### Introductory Paragraph

The beginning of your essay should restate the prompt or portions of the prompt, give your interpretation of the situation or quote and its general importance.

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|-----------------------|--|
| Attention Step:       | Begin with a piece of the writing prompt or quote.   |
| Background Statement: | Describe the general importance of prompt or quote.  |
| Thesis Statement:     | Fully define the prompt or quote. Expand upon your definition by using an explanation and/or general examples. |

#### Body Paragraph(s)

The middle of your essay should develop and explain your personal experience using lots of specific details. Think of it as a text-to-self or text-to-world connection. Explain how the connection began, developed, and ended. Include the life lesson that you learned through your experience. Remember to closely link your experience to the writing prompt.

#### Concluding Paragraph

The conclusion of your essay should explain how your personal experience relates to the writing prompt or quotation. It should restate the importance of the prompt or quotation to lives of the audience.

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|------------------------|---|
| Restated Thesis:       | Summarize the connection between your experience and the writing prompt or quotation. |
| Summary Sentence:      | Summarize the life lessons learned.   |
| Second Attention Step: | Tell the importance of the prompt or quotation  |

## HELPFUL HINTS

- Reread the prompt or quotation until you are sure you understand it.
- If writing about a quotation, break it down into smaller parts to find meaning.
- Define individual words to enhance understanding of prompt or quotation.
- Choose a personal experience that is clearly related to the prompt or quotation.
- Include specific examples with lots of details.
- Create clear connections between examples and prompt or quotation.
- Reflect upon the life lessons learned and connect to prompt or quotation.

## Sample Explanatory Writing Prompts

### Sample 1

Life can be full of unexpected moments. Identify a time when you experienced an unexpected moment.

Write an essay about a time when you experienced an unexpected moment. Explain why the moment was unexpected and how it affected your life. Be sure to explain your choice by using details and examples.

### Sample 2

Many students enjoy doing something special for their family and friends. For example they may take care of their younger sibling or help clean the basement.

Write an essay that describes something special that you would like to do for your family or friends. Explain why this would be something special and how your family or friends might react. Be sure to include details and facts to support your explanation.

### Sample 3

"A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." - Confucius

Write an essay explaining what this quotation means to you. Use details and examples in your essay.

### Sample 4

"The greatest barrier to success is the fear of failure." - Sven Goran Eriksson

Write an essay explaining what this quotation means to you. Use details and examples in your essay.

## Sample Explanatory Writing Prompt Response

"If you find a path to with no obstacles, it probably does not lead anywhere" – Anonymous

Write an essay explaining what this quotation means to you. Use details and examples in your essay.

A "path with no obstacles" would certainly be most people's dream come true. Imagine living life without any problems. Imagine finding success without having to face failure. Imagine what such a life would be. To me, this quote holds the truth of life. Of course, not having to run into mistakes would be a dream come true for me. But at the same time, it would also be my own dreadful loss. Obstacles, failures, mistakes, every single challenge one encounters happens for a reason. A "path with no obstacles" is not natural. Whether everyone thinks, obstacles are necessary in everyone's path to succeed.

If one thinks about some of the most successful people in life, nearly every single one had great, if not ostensibly insurmountable obstacles in their "paths." Albert Einstein, for instance, suffered from mental retardation as well as rejection from the first college he applied to. But those obstacles were necessary for his incredible contributions to the science community today. Another example is Bill Gates, the second richest man in the world and chairman of Microsoft. Gates was ostracized by his peers during his elementary years, but such hardships made him the successful figure he is today.

Failure is like oxygen in my life. It occurs all around me. It occurs to me. It is an omnipresent "thing!" Obstacles are what prepare us for life by teaching us a little more about ourselves and the world and people around us. To be where I am today, I had to swim through an enormous pool of failures. Although I drowned at some points I always came back up and kept on swimming. A good example of this as well as the importance of failure is when I first entered middle school. Throughout elementary school, I was able to succeed in all of my coursework without much effort. Only after I got my first failing grade did I learn that it is important to prepare ahead. This failure taught me how it's a competitive world, and one has to work to get by.

Now some people may be thinking that there are those that seem to be successful, powerful, and rich without effort. But what I believe is either they had a major failure already, or there is one waiting for them in the corner. Take wealthy people for example. Most wealthy people by birth are so accustomed to royal treatment that they have not learned the importance and difficulty of earning money. As a result, if he or she somehow loses money, survival will be difficult.

A path without obstacles probably does not lead somewhere because there is probably nowhere to lead to. Paths in life are made up of mistakes, and the destination is the culmination, the results, the golden lessons learned from mistakes.

Just how these people failed, I also failed. I failed in my youth and I probably will fail many more times. And to tell you the truth, without failure, I would have absolutely no idea at all where I would have ended up But I can say this honestly: it would certainly be a bad place.