

How to Use the Materials

There are 48 prompts in this *QuickWrites* book. Included in the book is a CD of all the prompts for various teaching settings. The prompts contain three main sections, listed below.

Reading Prompt

Each prompt contains a reading document that includes a persuasive, narrative, or expository paragraph with a topic that promotes writing based on nonfiction and real-world experiences. As students read the documents, they begin to form opinions on the issues presented. Once students have read the prompt, they should read the question.

Question

Each prompt contains a question that students are to answer in paragraph form. Each question has been carefully constructed to encourage the writer to take a position or to frame a response. Questions have also been designed to appeal to student interests and writing levels.

Directions

Directions are given to instruct the students on how to answer the questions. The prompts that are persuasive in nature encourage students to consider more than one side of each issue before determining the position they will take. They also encourage students to call upon previous personal experiences, readings, observations, reasoning, and examples taken from studies.

Using the CD

This book comes with a CD. The CD includes all the prompts so they can be displayed on a computer monitor or easily printed, if desired. This will allow for a variety of instructional methods, including independent, small group, or whole-class instruction.

Writing Settings

There are many opportunities to teach writing in your classroom. Are you taking advantage of the various formats? There are four main types of writing settings that take place in a writing classroom. Each setting plays a specific role in strengthening the writing skills of your students.

Modeled Writing

Modeled writing is the teacher demonstrating how to write. The students can see how to write. The teacher models what is thought, said, and written. When the teacher models writing in front of the class, the teacher should be thinking aloud while writing. When giving a writing assignment, go through the complete process that students should follow in a modeled writing setting. Walking through the process of reading and responding to a writing prompt can be very helpful to your students.

Shared Writing

Shared writing is when students are encouraged to share ideas while the teacher does the writing. As the class works in an interactive way to write the text, the teacher serves as the writer or the scribe. Again, the class has a model of correct spelling, punctuation, grammar, and content, while using the thoughts and ideas of the students. The teacher should ask such questions as, “What can I write about in the next sentence?” “Tell me a little bit more about what you mean.” “What should I put at the end of this sentence?”

Guided Writing

During a guided-writing lesson, the teacher works with small groups of students who have similar strengths, and provides instruction. The teacher can use modeling again with these small groups. The teacher is able to focus on the key areas and levels of these students.

Independent Writing

Students can write independently when they need very little support or when they are writing just for the experience. Be sure that students who can work independently are given plenty of opportunity to do so. All students should participate in independent writing as well as the other writing settings. Setting up centers is a good way to do this.

Sample Essay #1

Family Vacations

Families spend their summer vacations in many ways. Some visit relatives. Others go camping. Some take cruises, and some go to the beach or amusement parks. Sometimes families visit the same spot each year, such as a cabin or beach house. Other times, they try to visit new places. When it comes to vacations, there is something just right for every family.

Question:

What is your favorite vacation that you took with your family?

Directions:

Think about your best family vacation. Describe where you went and what you did that made the vacation so special.

Family Vacations

Our family has been going to the Russian River for as long as I can remember. It is off of the California coast, and we usually go in the summer. My mom told me that she started to go there when she was a little girl, and that is why we all still go.

We stay in cabins not far from the river. My mom packs all of our food, and we have peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for lunch. We go out everyday to play and swim. In the early morning, my grandfather, uncles, and dad all wake us up and we go fishing. My grandpa always wants to get the biggest fish!

This vacation is special because we are all together. My parents like it because we are all in a place where we don't have to go anywhere and it doesn't cost a lot of money. We like it because no one goes to work and it feels like we just play all day. I think I will always go to the Russian River for my family vacation.

Mechanics and Grammar Quick Reference (cont.)

Types of Sentences

Declarative Sentences

A declarative sentence makes a statement. It is also called a “telling sentence.” It ends with a period.

Example: The baby has brown eyes.

Interrogative Sentences

An interrogative sentence asks a question. It is also called an “asking sentence.” It ends with a question mark.

Example: Are you my teacher?

Imperative Sentences

An imperative sentence makes a command.

Example: You must come tomorrow.

Exclamatory Sentences

An exclamatory sentence communicates a strong feeling, emotion, or surprise. It ends with an exclamation point.

Example: You are great!

When I Grow Up

Some people know from the time they are very young what kind of career they want to have when they grow up. Other people do not decide until they finish school. Some adults even switch careers after working at the same job for many years. For example, a firefighter might decide to write a book. A doctor might decide to open a restaurant. It is normal to change your mind many times while you are in school about the career you might want to have when you are older. As you learn about different careers, it will be exciting to discover all the choices you have!

Question:

What kind of career do you think you might like to have when you are older?

Directions:

Explain why you think you would like this kind of career. Tell the reader why you think you would be good at it.

Healthy Choices

Dear Cafeteria Manager,

We keep hearing about how kids today need to eat more fruits and vegetables. I read that more kids than ever are overweight. It is partly because we do not get enough exercise and because we eat too much fast food. I know that there is some healthy food on the school cafeteria menu. But a lot of the time, it is not something that my friends and I like. On those days we wind up bringing our own lunch.

I heard about another school that has a salad bar. I thought that would be a great idea for our school, too. We could have lots of fresh fruits and vegetables. I'll bet some kids would even eat a salad every day. The younger kids might need some help at first, but I think they would get the hang of it fast.

If we could get a salad bar, the cafeteria would make more money, and our students would be healthier!

Sincerely,
Julie Gardner



Question:

What kinds of changes could be made at your school to help get kids in shape?



Directions:

Write a letter of your own to your school cafeteria manager or principal. Think of some things that would make it fun for you and your friends to get and stay in shape. Be creative!