

Sample Writing Topics

Choose a topic from the list below. Remember to choose the topic you know the most about. Try to make your writing piece about 2 pages in length, handwritten.

Expository

1. Everyone is an “expert” at something. Think of something you do well - anything at all. EXPLAIN how to do this so clearly and so completely that your reader will understand just what it takes to be good at this activity.
2. Students choose a variety of ways in which to stay physically fit. Many choose to participate in organized sports, while others choose individual out-of-school sports or other ways to exercise. EXPLAIN why an activity you chose is so important to you.
3. You may have heard the expression, “Experience is the best teacher.” Think of an experience or situation in which you either learned something or taught something to someone else. EXPLAIN what was learned or taught by this experience.

How to Write an Expository Paper

Expository writing gives information, explains something, clarifies, or defines. The writing teaches, reveals, informs, or amplifies the reader’s understanding through a carefully crafted mix of key points and critical support.

It:

- Uses facts.
- Has a logical order.
- Has a conclusion.
- Has the voice of the writer.

Grade 6: Expository (Example of a “High” paper)

Title: “Ann Sullivan”

Topic: Think about someone who would be a good role model. Choose a person you know or know about, and **explain** what makes the person a good role model.

SCORES AND COMMENTARY (Phrases in bold are taken from the *Official Writing Scoring Guide*):

Ideas and Content: 5 **The writing is clear, focused and interesting.** The writing includes main ideas about Ann Sullivan’s life and **relevant, carefully selected details.** The **thorough and balanced explanation** supports the main idea of Ann Sullivan being a role model. The writing **makes connections and shares insights** (“She struggled to teach Helen how to understand things, but never gave up. After a while, Ann finally got through to Helen and achieved her goal.”).

Organization: 5 **The organization enhances the central idea** of Ann Sullivan being a role model. The order and structure are strong and move the reader through the events of Ann’s life. The **beginning**, although somewhat undeveloped, is **inviting** and is an appropriate way to introduce the topic. The body uses **effective sequencing** and provides background information about Ann before going on to tell about her time with Helen. The **satisfying conclusion** includes details about Ann’s personal life and a strong statement supporting Ann Sullivan being a role model.

Voice: 5 The writer has chosen an **appropriate** academic voice for this topic. The writer’s **commitment** to the topic **is strong** and shows that the writer chose how to communicate the message most effectively. The interesting details about Ann’s life give a sense that **the topic has come to life** and shows **conviction** and **originality** (“She did not abandon Helen like most people do when they achieve their goals. Instead she became Helen’s full time teacher for the rest of her life.”).

Word Choice: 5 The writer’s **words convey the intended message in an interesting, precise, and natural way** that is appropriate to the purpose of explaining why Ann Sullivan is a role model. The writer **employs a broad range of words that have been carefully chosen and thoughtfully placed for impact** (“Ann Sullivan was an extraordinary woman. She had a harsh childhood but did not pity herself.”). The vocabulary is striking but not overdone.

Sentence Fluency: 5 **The writing has an easy flow and rhythm.** Sentences are **carefully crafted** with **variation in sentence structure, length, and beginnings.** The writer uses a variety of lengths to create emphasis of main ideas and opinions (“Her name was Ann Sullivan.” “Her name was Helen Keller.”). There is a **natural, fluent sound.**

Conventions: 5 The writing demonstrates **strong control of standard writing conventions** and uses them effectively to enhance communication. Even though the writing lacks a wide range of conventions, **errors** are so few and so minor that they **do not impede readability.** In this sufficiently long and complex piece, there is **little need for editing.**

In 1866, one of America's most memorable citizens was born. Her name was Ann Sullivan.

Ann Sullivan did not have a very good childhood. When she was only ten years old, she was sent to Tewksbury Almshouse. Later in her life she was sent to Perkins Institute for the Blind because her eyes were seriously damaged from a childhood infection.

In 1886, she graduated from the Perkins Institute and one year later was sent to teach a blind, deaf, and stubborn seven year-old girl how to spell and basically become a civilized human being. Her name was Helen Keller.

This task was probably the toughest thing she had to accomplish in her life. She struggled to teach Helen how to understand things, but never gave up. After a while, Ann finally got through to Helen and achieved her goal. She did not abandon Helen like most people do when they achieve their goals. Instead she became Helen's full

time teacher for the rest of her life.

In 1905, Ann fell in love with and married a man named John Macey. They lived and loved each other until Ann's death in 1936.

Ann Sullivan was an extraordinary woman. She had a harsh childhood but did not pity herself. Instead she tried to make the most of herself and become a teacher, as well as, a role model. She never gave up on something she wanted to accomplish. That's why Ann Sullivan is my rolemodel!

Expository Essay

(example: In this problem and solution essay, sixth-grade writer Nicholas grabs the reader's attention with some "shocking statistics" that identify the problem. The essay closes with some possible solutions as well as a point to ponder.)

Cheating in America

Did you know that 7 out of 10 students have cheated at least once in the past year? Did you know that 50 percent of those students have cheated more than twice? These shocking statistics are from a survey of 9,000 U.S. high school students.

Incredibly, teachers may even be encouraging their students to cheat! Last year at a school in Detroit, teachers allegedly provided their students with answers to statewide standard tests. Students at the school told investigators that they were promised pizza and money if they cheated on the test as told. Similar allegations at several schools in San Diego county have prompted investigation. A student at a local high school says she sees students cheating on almost every test, and the teachers don't do anything about it.

The kids claim that they're tempted to cheat because of peer pressure and intense competition to get top grades. Many kids also say that their parents are setting a bad example by "fudging" on income taxes, lying about age to pay lower admission prices, or cheating their way out of a speeding ticket. They are sending a message to their kids that it is okay to cheat and lie.

Finding solutions to this problem is difficult. In our school's math classes, each student has different problems on their test papers, so it is useless to look at someone else's answers. Teachers could also randomly mix the problems throughout the page. Another solution is for adults to lower their expectations. Chances are that students believe cheating is the only way to meet unreasonably high expectations. Perhaps it is time for parents and teachers to seriously examine whether higher test results are important enough to encourage cheating.