

UNIVERSITY INTERSCHOLASTIC LEAGUE READY WRITING CONTEST

HIGH SCHOOL TOPICS

DISTRICT 1 • 2008

Read both of the following statements carefully; then write an expository essay on a topic clearly related to one or the other of the two statements. **Provide your own title.** You are not expected to write on both topics.

Contestants who are hand-writing their compositions must use their own standard 8 1/2 x 11-inch ruled white notebook paper or typing paper or the paper provided by the host school. Contestants shall write or print the composition **in ink** and on only one side of the paper. If contestants choose to use their own laptop computers, they must bring their own portable printers, and associated hardware, software and paper. The typed entry must be single-sided and double-spaced, using any standard 12-point font on 8 1/2 x 11-inch white paper. When printing the contest on an electronic printer, the print command must be started by the time contest time expires. Students who opt to compose their entries on computers accept the risk of computer malfunction. In case of computer malfunction, the contestant may use the remaining allotted time to complete the composition in handwriting or compose on another computer (if available).

Ready Writing prompts are provided as springboards for thought, not to advocate particular points of view. Contestants should not conclude that quotations or statements used in prompts reflect the opinion of the UIL.

Topic I

"It's a lost art, slinking away. Now the fashion is slinking back. Nobody wants to simply admit they made a mistake and disappear for awhile. Nobody even wants to use the weasel words: 'Mistakes were made.' No, far better to pop right back up and get in the face of those who were savoring your absence."

— Maureen Dowd, "Slinking off into history,"
The New York Times, September 21, 2007

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Topic II

"As long as sound bites and controversy sell, politics is a divisive advertising game, and our brightest students never explore interactively deep problems relating to the human condition, our country will remain addicted to soft intellectual entertainment, and we will continue to feel 'we' are right and 'they' are wrong. And it will all seem OK, so long as we never subject ourselves, through the process of elenchus,* to being embarrassed by our own ignorance."

— Thomas G. Palaima, "What would Socrates think about our democracy today?"
Austin American-Statesman, August 28, 2007

*elenchus - a process of "belittling" and "publicly shaming" individuals through examination of the usually faulty reasoning behind their opinions and beliefs.

UNIVERSITY INTERSCHOLASTIC LEAGUE READY WRITING CONTEST

HIGH SCHOOL TOPICS

DISTRICT 2 • 2008

Read both of the following statements carefully; then write an expository essay on a topic clearly related to one or the other of the two statements. **Provide your own title.** You are not expected to write on both topics.

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Topic I

“America has toiled more than two centuries now, trying to craft a system of free expression that respects both the individual and the larger community. When should your right to express yourself prevail over my right not to share your expression? That’s the trick question and the answer requires more than magic. It requires maturity, responsibility and vigilance.”

— Kathleen Parker, "Sometimes, freedom can be messy,"
Orlando Sentinel, September 9, 2007

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Topic II

“I do not see what it makes for the safety, good morals, and certainly not for the dignity, of men, that some have conquered and others have been conquered, except that it yields them that most insane pomp of human glory, in which 'they have received their reward' who burned with excessive desire of it and carried on most eager wars.”

— Augustine (354-430),
City of God, V, 17