


*Ready Writing: All You Ever
Needed to Know and Then
Some*

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“People on the outside think there’s something magical, that you go up in the attic at midnight and cast the bones and come down in the morning with a story, but it isn’t like that. You sit in back of the typewriter and you work, and that’s all there is to it.”

--Harlan Ellison
American Writer

What is READY WRITING?

READY WRITING is a two-hour event in which contestants write an ***expository essay*** on one of two prompts.

READY WRITING, the term, comes from the idea that good writers, like good extemporaneous speakers, should be prepared to write well on a wide variety of subjects without prior preparation. Simply, contestants must be **READY** to write.

What is EXPOSITORY WRITING?

Expository Writing explains, proves, explores, or informs.
Exposition explains a writer's ideas or opinions on a subject.

Exposition is one of the four basic types of writing along with description, narration, and argumentation. To an extent **exposition** is a combination of **all** of these types of writing. The primary focus of **exposition** is on the **TOPIC**, unlike an argument where the focus is on audience, and whereas in creative writing, the focus is on self.

What are the PROMPTS like?

Prompt topics are timeless, rather than timely.

As writers you should be “active” readers. Read always—newspapers, magazines, on-line articles, opinion editorials. Listen to NPR, watch the news, and programs such as “60 Minutes,” “20/20,” and “Meet the Press.”

**It is key you know what is going on in your community, in Texas, in the United States, and in the World.*

Prompts deal with such broad categories as Sociology, Education, Family/Lifestyles, Science/Environment, Arts, Sports, etc.

Why Compete in Ready Writing?

- *Practice writing under the pressure of a time limit, much like post-graduate college entrance exams (PSAT, AP, SAT, ACT Exams).*
- *The chance to take risks, and not harm your GPA.*
- *The opportunity to have undivided attention given your writing, and receiving feedback on your work.*
- *The possibility of scholarships.*
- *The FUN of competition.*

Simply, **Expository Writing is the kind of writing you will likely use most often in years to come (exams, term papers, job reports, etc.)*

How Do I Prepare for Ready Writing?

Suggestions from Writers at the State Meet:

- *Read, a lot: magazines, newspapers, quality classic and contemporary novels such as those suggested on the AP Language and Literature Exam Lists—focus especially on Non-Fiction.*
- *Develop your own Unique Writing Style (“voice”).*
- *Engage, often, in complex, stimulating conversations with your peers, teachers, parents.*
- **Don’t forget that a “mind is a terrible thing to waste!”*

Getting Started: A Self-Inventory

Answer the following Questions:

- Which books have you gotten “lost in” in the last six months?*
- Have you read the daily newspaper four of the last seven days? What top three current events come to mind?*
- What three prominent figures come to mind? Why?*
- What are three or four “life” questions that consistently run through your mind?*
- What have you written recently that represented writing to “find out?” Poetry? Fiction?*

cont

- *What piece of **FICTION** have you read that “touched” you? Why?*
 - *What piece of **NON-FICTION** “touched” you? A speech, essay, opinion editorial?*
- *Your responses to these questions will give you a solid foundation to work with when you begin to write **expository essays** required of you in **Ready Writing** since utilizing prior knowledge will be an asset to writing an effective essay.*

Concerning Writing

“I argue that as human beings we write to communicate, plan, petition, remember, announce, list, imagine . . . but above all, we write to hold our lives in our hands and to make something of them.”

Writing allows us to turn chaos into something beautiful, to frame selected moments, to uncover and celebrate the organizing patterns of our existence. As human beings we have a deep need to represent our experience. By articulating our experience, we reclaim it for ourselves.”

--Lucy Calkins



The 3 “R’s” for Successful (W)Riting

*RHETORIC

(Close) *READING

(W)*RITING

RHETORIC

Rhetoric—Essentially, and at its most basic level, *rhetoric* is “the language of persuasion.”

Ready Writers—all writers--should have a basic understanding of *rhetoric* and *rhetorical devices* and *strategies*. Further, effective and accomplished writers *rhetorically* plan (manipulate) their writing for effect and intent.

CLOSE READING

Close Reading—Disciplined re-reading of inherently complex and worthy texts. Because complex texts do not give up their meaning easily, it is essential that readers re-read such texts.

Close reading allows a reader to determine what a text says explicitly, as well as implicitly. Good readers also close read in order to note such rhetorical devices and strategies as *diction, syntax, tone, imagery, figurative language*, and the overall *organization* of the text.

Writing

Ready Writers must have a basic understanding of *RHETORIC*, be able to proficiently *CLOSE READ* and understand complex texts, and they should, in their own writing mimic the *WRITING* style(s) of effective writers, and eventually creating their own writing style.

*How does a good Ready Writer become an even better Writer? By reading, noting, and mimicking the writing of effective writers.