UIL Ready Writing
Notes

2018-19 Ready Writing Prompts

Invitational A

Topic I

All who have meditated on the art of governing mankind have been convinced that the fate of empires depends on the education of youth. --Aristotle, Greek Philosopher, 384-322 BC

Topic II

Diversity is being invited to the party; inclusion is being asked to dance.

--Verna Myers, Lawyer and Consultant, b. 1961

Invitational B

Topic I

"Human kindness has never weakened the stamina or softened the fiber of a free people. A nation does not have to be cruel to be tough." --Franklin D. Roosevelt, American President, 1882-1945

Topic II

"The poor tell us who we are. The prophets tell us who we can be. So we hide the poor and kill the prophets."

--Philip Berrigan, American Peace Activist, 1923-2002

District

Topic I

"You will continue to suffer if you have an emotional reaction to everything that is said to you. True power is sitting back and observing things with logic. True power is restraint. If words control you that means everyone else can control you. Breathe and allow things to pass." --Warren Buffett, American Businessman and Philanthropist, b. 1930

Topic II

"If you want to be a true professional, you will do something outside yourself. Something to repair tears in your community. Something to make life a little better for people less fortunate than you. That's what I think a meaningful life is – living not for oneself, but for one's community." --Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Associate Justice, US Supreme Court, b. 1933

Regional

Topic I

"The greatest tie of all is language…. Words are the only things that last forever. The most tremendous monuments or prodigies of engineering crumble under the hand of Time. The Pyramids moulder, the bridges rust, the canals fill up, grass covers the railway track; but words spoken two or three thousand years ago remain with us now, not as mere relics of the past, but with all their pristine vital force." --Winston Churchill (1874-1965), Former British Prime Minister, *News of the World* Interview, 1938.

Topic II

"The problem nowadays is that children have become too much the center of attention. Their parents, their families, everybody around them feels a need to put them on a pedestal. So much effort is invested in boosting their self-esteem that they are made to feel special in and of themselves, without having done anything."

--Rafael Nadal (b. 1986), Spanish Professional Tennis Player, *Rafa,* 2011.

State

Topic I

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh.*

On Christmas Eve 103 years ago, my grandfather waited in a dark and dank cell. He sailed by steamship across the Pacific Ocean from India to America leaving behind colonial rule, but when he landed on American shores immigration officials saw his dark skin, his tall turban worn as a part of his Sikh faith, and saw him not as a brother but as foreign, as suspect, and they threw him behind bars where he languished for months until a single man, a white man, a lawyer named Henry Marshall filed a writ of habeas corpus that released him on Christmas Eve 1913.

My grandfather Kehar Singh became a farmer, free to practice the heart of his Sikh faith — love and oneness. So when his Japanese American neighbors were rounded up and taken to their own detention camps in the deserts of America he went out to see them when no one else would. He looked after their farms until they returned home. He refused to stand down.

In the aftermath of September 11th when hate violence exploded in these United States, a man that I called uncle was murdered. I tried to stand up. I became a lawyer like the man who freed my grandfather and I joined a generation of activists fighting detentions and deportation, surveillance and special registration, hate crimes and racial profiling. And after fifteen years, with every film, with every lawsuit, with every campaign, I thought we were making the nation safer for the next generation.

And then my son was born. On Christmas Eve, I watched him ceremoniously put the milk and cookies by the fire for Santa Claus. And after he went to sleep, I then drank the milk and ate the cookies. I wanted him to wake up and see them gone in the morning. I wanted him to believe in a world that was magical. But I am leaving my son a world that is more dangerous than the one I was given. I am raising — we are raising — a brown boy in America, a brown boy who may someday wear a turban as part of his faith.

And in America today, as we enter an era of enormous rage, as white nationalists hail this moment as their great awakening, as hate acts against Sikhs and our Muslim brothers and sisters are at an all-time high, I know that there will be moments whether on the streets or in the school yards where my son will be seen as foreign, as suspect, as a terrorist. Just as black bodies are still seen as criminal, brown bodies are still seen as illegal, trans bodies are still seen as immoral, indigenous bodies are still seen as savage, the bodies of women and girls seen as someone else's property. And when we see these bodies not as brothers and sisters then it becomes easier to bully them, to rape them, to allow policies that neglect them, that incarcerate them, that kill them.

Yes, rabbi, the future is dark. On this New Year's Eve, this watch night, I close my eyes and I see the darkness of my grandfather's cell. And I can feel the spirit of ever-rising optimism in the Sikh tradition Chardi Kala** within him.

So the mother in me asks "what if?" What if this darkness is not the darkness of the tomb, but the darkness of the womb? What if our America is not dead but a country that is waiting to be born? What if the story of America is one long labor? What if all of our grandfathers and grandmothers are standing behind us now, those who survived occupation and genocide, slavery and Jim Crow, detentions and political assault? What if they are whispering in our ears today, tonight, "You are brave"? What if this is our nation's great transition?

What does the midwife tell us to do? Breathe. And then? Push. Because if we don't push we will die. If we don't push our nation will die. Tonight we will breathe. Tomorrow we will labor in love through love, and your revolutionary love is the magic we will show our children.

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh.

--Valerie Kaur (1981), American Civil Rights Activist, *Breathe and Push*, 2016.

**The beloved community belongs to divine Oneness, and so does all that it achieves*.

***Ever-rising spirits*

....

Topic II

I am an invisible man. No, I am not a spook like those who haunted Edgar Allan Poe; nor am I one of your Hollywood-movie ectoplasms. I am a man of substance, of flesh and bone, fiber and liquids -- and I might even be said to possess a mind. I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me. Like the bodiless heads you see sometimes in circus sideshows, it is as though I have been surrounded by mirrors of hard, distorting glass. When they approach me they see only my surroundings, themselves, or figments of their imagination -- indeed, everything and anything except me.

Nor is my invisibility exactly a matter of a bio-chemical accident to my epidermis. That invisibility to which I refer occurs because of a peculiar disposition of the eyes of those with whom I come in contact. A matter of the construction of their inner eyes, those eyes with which they look through their physical eyes upon reality. I am not complaining, nor am I protesting either. It is sometimes advantageous to be unseen, although it is most often rather wearing on the nerves. Then too, you're constantly being bumped against by those of poor vision. Or again, you often doubt if you really exist. You wonder whether you aren't simply a phantom in other people's minds. Say, a figure in a nightmare which the sleeper tries with all his strength to destroy. It's when you feel like this that, out of resentment, you begin to bump people back. And, let me confess, you feel that way most of the time. You ache with the need to convince yourself that you do exist in the real world, that you're a part of all the sound and anguish, and you strike out with your fists, you curse and you swear to make them recognize you. And, alas, it's seldom successful.

One night I accidentally bumped into a man, and perhaps because of the near darkness he saw me and called me an insulting name. I sprang at him, seized his coat lapels and demanded that he apologize. He was a tall blond man, and as my face came close to his he looked insolently out of his blue eyes and cursed me, his breath hot in my face as he struggled. I pulled his chin down sharp upon the crown of my head, butting him as I had seen the West Indians do, and I felt his flesh tear and the blood gush out, and I yelled, "Apologize! Apologize!" But he continued to curse and struggle, and I butted him again and again until he went down heavily, on his knees, profusely bleeding. I kicked him repeatedly, in a frenzy because he still uttered insults though his lips were frothy with blood. Oh yes, I kicked him! And in my outrage I got out my knife and prepared to slit his throat, right there beneath the lamplight in the deserted street, holding him by the collar with one hand, and opening the knife with my teeth -- when it occurred to me that the man had not seen me, actually; that he, as far as he knew, was in the midst of a walking nightmare! And I stopped the blade, slicing the air as I pushed him away, letting him fall back to the street. I stared at him hard as the lights of a car stabbed through the darkness. He lay there, moaning on the asphalt; a man almost killed by a phantom. It unnerved me. I was both disgusted and ashamed. I was like a drunken man myself, wavering about on weakened legs. Then I was amused. Something in this man's thick head had sprung out and beaten him within an inch of his life. I began to laugh at this crazy discovery. Would he have awakened at the point of death? Would Death himself have freed him for wakeful living? But I didn't linger. I ran away into the dark, laughing so hard I feared I might rupture myself. The next day I saw his picture in the Daily News, beneath a caption stating that he had been "mugged." Poor fool, poor blind fool, I thought with sincere compassion, mugged by an invisible man!

--Ralph Ellison (1914-1994) American Author, Prologue, *Invisible Man*, 1980.

What is *rhetoric?*

****

Rhetoric is the study of effective speaking and writing. And the art of persuasion. And many other things.

In its long and vigorous history rhetoric has enjoyed many definitions, accommodated different purposes, and varied widely in what it included. And yet, for most of its history it has maintained its fundamental character as a discipline for training students 1) to perceive how language is at work orally and in writing, and 2) to become proficient in applying the resources of language in their own speaking and writing.

Discerning how language is working in others' or one's own writing and speaking, one must (artificially) divide form and content, *what* is being said and *how* this is said. Because rhetoric examines so attentively the *how* of the language, the *methods* and *means* of communication, it has sometimes been discounted as something only concerned with style and appearances, and not with the quality or *content* of communication. For many (such as Plato) rhetoric deals with the superficial at best, the deceptive at worst ("mere rhetoric"), when one might better attend to matters of substance, truth, or reason as attempted in dialectic and philosophy of religion.

Rhetoric has sometimes lived down its critics, but as set forth from antiquity, rhetoric was a comprehensive art just as much concerned with *what* one could say as *how* one might say it. Indeed, a basic premise for rhetoric is the indivisibility of means from meaning; *how* one says something conveys meaning as much as *what* one says. Rhetoric studies the effectiveness of language comprehensively, including its emotional impact (pathos), as much as its propositional content (logos). To see how language and thought worked together, however, it has first been necessary to artificially divide content and form.

RHETORICAL ANALYSIS:

A Basic Guide to What Every Writer Should Know

What is ***<u>RHETORIC</u>***?

RHETORIC is
"The art of using language as a means to persuade."

When composing the ***Expository Essay***, you should be familiar with the following ***rhetorical devices/strategies*** as well as each devices' **intended effect** when used in a text.

<u>Diction</u>	***<u>Syntax</u>***	***<u>Tone</u>***	***<u>Imagery</u>***
(word choice)	(sentence structure)	(manner something said or implied)	(appeals to senses)

<u>Figurative Language</u>

(metaphor, similes, alliteration, repetition, etc.)

+

The ***<u>Appeals</u>*—**the "mega-tools" of rhetoric. The appeals are the manner with which the author connects with his or her audience. **Note:** The Appeals must not be confused with the rhetorical devices. The Appeals are created by the rhetorical devices.

Ethos: Argument by character*
Logos: Argument by logic
Pathos: Argument by emotion

*Aristotle called *ethos* the most important appeal of all – even more important than *logos.* He believed an individual's *logic* was formed and based on his *ethics.*

+

<u>Organization</u>

(The structure of the passage – i.e., sentence/paragraph length, etc. The manner in which a passage is organized is a "visual" or a "picture" that needs to be considered when rhetorically analyzing a piece.)

Rhetorical Analysis: *HOW* vs *WHAT*

The best writers are rhetorically aware that effective, quality composition involves, first, the *HOW*, then the *WHAT*.

The *HOW* is an awareness of the textual organization of a piece (word choice, a sentence's grammatical structure, sentence length, paragraph length, etc.). Simply, *how* does the text appear on the paper? How is the poem, the opinion editorial, the short story, the song, the speech intentionally organized?

The *WHAT* is the text's message. *What* does the text say? *What* story does the poem, the song, the speech tell us? *What* is the writer's stance on the subject?

Shame by Dick Gregory

I never learned hate at home, or shame. I had to go to school for that. I was about seven years old when I got my first big lesson. I was in love with a little girl named Helene Tucker, a light-complexioned little girl with pigtails and nice manners. She was always clean and she was smart in school. I think I went to school then mostly to look at her. I brushed my hair and even got me a little old handkerchief. It was a lady's handkerchief, but I didn't want Helene to see me wipe my nose on my hand.

The pipes were frozen again, there was no water in the house, but I washed my socks and shirt every night. I'd get a pot, and go over to Mister Ben's grocery store, and stick my pot down into his soda machine and scoop out some chopped ice. By evening the ice melted to water for washing. I got sick a lot that winter because the fire would go out at night before the clothes were dry. In the morning I'd put them on, wet or dry, because they were the only clothes I had.

Everybody's got a Helene Tucker, a symbol of everything you want. I loved her for her goodness, her cleanness, her popularity. She'd walk down my street and my brothers and sisters would yell, "Here comes Helene," and I'd rub my tennis sneakers on the back of my pants and wish my hair wasn't so nappy and the white folks' shirt fit me better. I'd run out on the street. If I knew my place and didn't come too close, she'd wink at me and say hello. That was a good feeling. Sometimes I'd follow her all the way home, and shovel the snow off her walk and try to make friends with her momma and her aunts. I'd drop money on her stoop late at night on my way back from shining shoes in the taverns. And she had a daddy, and he had a good job. He was a paperhanger.

I guess I would have gotten over Helene by summertime, but something happened in that classroom that made her face hang in front of me for the next twenty-two years. When I played the drums in high school, it was for Helene, and when I broke track records in college, it was for Helene, and when I started standing behind microphones and heard applause, I wished Helene could hear it too. It wasn't until I was twenty-nine years old and married and making money that I finally got her out of my system. Helene was sitting in that classroom when I learned to be ashamed of myself.

It was on a Thursday. I was sitting in the back of the room, in a seat with a chalk circle drawn around it. The idiot's seat, the troublemaker's seat.

The teacher thought I was stupid. Couldn't spell, couldn't read, couldn't do arithmetic. Just stupid. Teachers were never interested in finding out that you couldn't concentrate because you were so hungry, because you hadn't had any breakfast. All you could think about was noontime; would it ever come? Maybe you could sneak into the cloakroom and steal a bite of some kid's lunch out of a coat pocket. A bite of something. Paste. You can't really make a meal of paste, or put it on bread for a sandwich, but sometimes I'd scoop a few spoonfuls out of the big paste jar in the back of the room. Pregnant people get strange tastes. I was pregnant with poverty. Pregnant with dirt and pregnant with smells that made people turn away. Pregnant with cold and pregnant with shoes that were never bought for me. Pregnant with five other people in my bed and no daddy in the next room, and pregnant with hunger. Paste doesn't taste too bad when you're hungry.

The teacher thought I was a troublemaker. All she saw from the front of the room was a little black boy who squirmed in his idiot's seat and made noises and poked the kids around him. I guess she couldn't see a kid who made noises because he wanted someone to know he was there.

It was on a Thursday, the day before the Negro payday. The eagle always flew on Friday. The teacher was asking each student how much his father would give to the Community Chest. On Friday night, each kid would get the money from his father, and on Monday he would bring it to the school. I decided I was going to buy a daddy right then. I had money in my pocket from shining shoes and selling papers, and whatever Helene Tucker pledged for her daddy I was going to top it. And I'd hand the money right in. I wasn't going to wait until Monday to buy me a daddy.

I was shaking, scared to death. The teacher opened her book and started calling out names alphabetically: "Helene Tucker?" "My Daddy said he'd give two dollars and fifty cents." "That's very nice, Helene. Very, very nice indeed."

That made me feel pretty good. It wouldn't take too much to top that. I had almost three dollars in dimes and quarters in my pocket. I stuck my hand in my pocket and held on to the money, waiting for her to call my name. But the teacher closed her book after she called everybody else in the class.

I stood up and raised my hand. "What is it now?" "You forgot me?" She turned toward the blackboard. "I don't have time to be playing with you, Richard."

"My daddy said he'd..." "Sit down, Richard, you're disturbing the class." "My daddy said he'd give...fifteen dollars."

She turned around and looked mad. "We are collecting this money for you and your kind, Richard Gregory. If your daddy can give fifteen dollars you have no business being on relief."

"I got it right now, I got it right now, my Daddy gave it to me to turn in today, my daddy said ..."

"And furthermore," she said, looking right at me, her nostrils getting big and her lips getting thin and her eyes opening wide, "We know you don't have a daddy."

Helene Tucker turned around, her eyes full of tears. She felt sorry for me. Then I couldn't see her too well because I was crying, too.

"Sit down, Richard." And I always thought the teacher kind of liked me. She always picked me to wash the blackboard on Friday, after school. That was a big thrill; it made me feel important. If I didn't wash it, come Monday the school might not function right.

"Where are you going, Richard!"

I walked out of school that day, and for a long time I didn't go back very often.