

# UNIVERSITY INTERSCHOLASTIC LEAGUE

## READY WRITING CONTEST

### HIGH SCHOOL TOPICS

District • 2019

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 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.*

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### 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

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### 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

Conference Number \_\_\_\_\_

Contestant Number \_\_\_\_\_

# UIL Ready Writing Rubric

Evaluation criteria are listed in the order of importance. Circle score rating in each of the three major areas of *interest*, *organization*, and *correctness of style*, and check the column which best describes the quality in each of the sub-areas.

**(60%)**      1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18  
**INTEREST:** Writing exhibits originality of thought, analytical acuteness and overall coherence of exposition.

	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	EXCELLENT
Perceptive ideas	_____	_____	_____	_____
Originality	_____	_____	_____	_____
Examples	_____	_____	_____	_____
Title	_____	_____	_____	_____

**(30%)**      1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9  
**ORGANIZATION:** Each paragraph develops one idea and contributes to an understanding of main idea or thesis.

	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	EXCELLENT
Clear thesis	_____	_____	_____	_____
Well-developed paragraphs, focused on one idea	_____	_____	_____	_____
Transition	_____	_____	_____	_____
Thesis support	_____	_____	_____	_____
Composition clarity (as a whole)	_____	_____	_____	_____

**(10%)**      1 2 3  
**CORRECTNESS OF STYLE:**

	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	EXCELLENT
Punctuation	_____	_____	_____	_____
Sentence structure	_____	_____	_____	_____
Grammar	_____	_____	_____	_____
Word usage	_____	_____	_____	_____
Spelling	_____	_____	_____	_____

**TOTAL SCORE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:**

# UIL READY WRITING

## SUGGESTIONS FOR GRADING PROCEDURES

(Contest Director Should Discuss with Contest Judges)

Divide the papers among the graders.

STEP #1 Instruct judges to scan the papers first and award a plus (+) or minus (-) at the bottom of the last attached UIL Judging Rubric. (Either one or three rubrics will be attached to each essay, depending on choice in step #7)

STEP #2: Gather the essays and separate papers into (+) and (-) stacks.

STEP #3: Redistribute the (+) papers to the judges.

STEP #4: Judges read and give preliminary ranking to the (+) essays. (Each on separate rubrics)

STEP #5: Judges then determine the final ranking of the top 6 papers. Judges may award a total of 30 points by circling the appropriate numbers in each of the three major areas of consideration: interest, organization and correctness of style.

STEP #6: In accordance to rankings, provide at least one rubric assessment for each essay (both the + and - papers) entered in the contest. Judges write directly on the judging rubric, remembering to offer **constructive criticism** aimed at helping students overcome area(s) of weakness or error. The comments need not be long, but should be specific rather than general because specific references are more beneficial.

STEP #7: There are three possible methods for providing responses:  
1) One judge may give written response in the space provided on a rubric;  
2) All three judges may collaboratively provide responses on one rubric; or  
3) All three judges may write separate responses on separate rubrics.  
**NOTE:** Judges should never make corrections, comments, etc. directly on the papers. Comments are to be written on the rubric only!

Checked portions of at least one rubric should be completed for each contestant. **Return all judging rubrics to students with their essays.**

## COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Q. What if the student doesn't strictly address the topic on the prompt?

A: That's OK. The prompt is intended as a starting place. If a student sees ramifications or applications, he or she may write a coherent, expository essay on that portion of the prompt so long as the judge can identify a common thread between the prompt and the response. But the essay shouldn't ramble.

2. Q: What if a paper is interesting but short?

A: An essay should be well developed, intelligent. If it's clever, original, steady and reliable, even better. The long ago requirement was 1,000 words, minimum. Use this as a guideline but do not count words. Instead, consider whether the essay develops a theme, provides interesting and relevant examples and treats the subject with creativity and flair.

(Continued on reserve)

3. Q: What if an entry is technically correct but boring?

A: Ready writing rewards interest and creativity (60%) over formulaic writing or grammatical correctness (10%). Do not reward pomposity or the desire to shoehorn a quote from Thoreau or Blake fit into any situation. As William Golding noted, "What a word is truth." Alas, how true. How true!

4. Q: What if a paper has multiple grammar or punctuation errors?

A: Well, this isn't a grammar contest, but each judge may award three points for correctness of style. If judges notice many errors, they ain't got to award them three points at all.

5. Q: What if a student uses first person pronouns?

A: I don't see any problem with this as long as the essay is expository in nature. The student may use first person pronouns as appropriate when using a personal experience to create interest and substantiate the expository discussion. At least, that's how I see it.