



# Ready Writing



High School  
Practice Packet

Spring 2017



# UIL READY WRITING PRACTICE PACKET

## S17

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*We are a small company that listens! If you have any questions or if there is an area that you would like fully explored, let us hear from you. We hope you enjoy this product and stay in contact with us throughout your academic journey.*

~ President Hexco Inc., Linda Tarrant

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## JUDGING GUIDELINES - ABOUT EXPOSITORY WRITING & THIS CONTEST

Expository writing forms the basis of the UIL Ready Writing Contest. In its simplest dictionary definition, *expository* means *explanatory*. Expository writing, according to UIL rules, "explains, proves, or explores a topic in a balanced way, allowing the argument and the evidence given to be the deciding factor in the paper." Plainly stated, it is writing with a logical approach. Expository writing is designed to shed light on a chosen topic by presenting a clearly defined perspective. It is not meant to be highly persuasive, nor should it rely heavily on emotional appeal. The rules add that "descriptive or narrative passages may be used to illustrate or reinforce an idea or point, but they must be clearly subservient or incidental to the purpose of the exposition." This means contestants may introduce an illustration from their own experiences, an episode from history, or a fable, but only to *support* their arguments.

Ready Writing challenges contestants in ways other competitions do not. While most others include predetermined topics, extensive materials, reading lists, or study guides, Ready Writing requires contestants to utilize a toolbox contained entirely in their minds. In addition, the contents of this toolbox are unique, compared to those you would pack for a standard essay-writing scenario.

Contestants should carry an understanding of their audience. In Ready Writing this is you, a judge, who has read many essays and whose job it is to grade them in three specific areas: Interest, Organization, and Correctness of Style. Sixty percent of the score will come from Interest, thirty percent from Organization, and the remaining ten from Correctness of Style.

Interest is where contestants are scored for creativity and logic, beginning with an effective title, and providing examples that reveal a unique, yet structured perception of the topic. It does not mean that a wild story receives a top score! Instead, contestants receive a high score in this area for original thought, solid perspective, and pertinent examples. This is where personality and a distinctive perspective mold the essay, and where style personalizes the work. In short, this is the area in which contestants will benefit most from being themselves.

Organization pertains to the structure of the essay. The most interesting and educated perspective on a topic can be completely undermined by poor organization. Look for essays that follow a logical flow of ideas in which the main points support the thesis.

When scoring Correctness of Style, examine punctuation, sentence structure, grammar, word usage, and spelling. Proper grammar and clear sentence structure demonstrate a contestant's attention to detail and pride in his or her written work, not to mention a mastery of the mechanics of the written word.

It is essential that contestants approach this contest with a big picture mentality; focusing on only one of the three areas will not suffice. Your objective as a judge is to evaluate all aspects of the essay. Remember that the UIL rules have assigned different "weights" for each of the three elements, so an honest assessment of each will result in a fair score.

**JUDGING RUBRIC – READY WRITING**

Evaluation criteria are listed in the order of importance. Provide a numeric score in each of the three major categories: interest, organization, and correctness of style. Use a checkmark to describe the degree of quality in each of the sub-areas of the main categories. This will help students improve their scores in the future.

**Interest:** The essay is original, analytical, shows critical thinking and an overall cohesiveness of thought. This is 60% of the grade – a student can receive a maximum of 18 points.

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Perceptive ideas	_____	_____	_____	_____
Originality	_____	_____	_____	_____
Examples	_____	_____	_____	_____
Title	_____	_____	_____	_____

**Interest Score Max 18 pts.** \_\_\_\_\_

**Organization:** Each paragraph develops one idea and contributes to an understanding of the main idea or thesis. This is 30% of the score – a student can receive a maximum of 9 points.

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Clear thesis	_____	_____	_____	_____
Well-developed paragraphs, focused on one idea	_____	_____	_____	_____
Transition	_____	_____	_____	_____
Thesis support	_____	_____	_____	_____
Composition clarity (as a whole)	_____	_____	_____	_____

**Organization Score Max 9 pts.** \_\_\_\_\_

**Correctness of Style:** The essay uses correct grammar, sentence structure, spelling a variable vocabulary. This is 10% of the grade – a student can receive a maximum of 3 points.

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Punctuation	_____	_____	_____	_____
Sentence structure	_____	_____	_____	_____
Grammar	_____	_____	_____	_____
Word use	_____	_____	_____	_____
Spelling	_____	_____	_____	_____

**Correctness Score Max 3pts.** \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL SCORE Max 30pts.** \_\_\_\_\_

Additional comments:

## Ready Writing Invitational Test F16-E

**Topic I** "No matter how lonely and isolated and starved for connection you are, there's always the possibility in the online world that you can find a place to be accepted, or discover a friendship that's started with the smallest of interests but could last a lifetime."

Felicia Day, *You're Never Weird on the Internet*, 2015

**Topic II** "In a culture in which "connection" usually refers to the strength of the cell phone signal, quieting the mind - even just sitting alone in the backyard, much less in the forest - can be a difficult rite of passage."

Jon Young, *What the Robin Knows*, 2012