

Texas UIL
Ready Writing



region practice packet
high school



UIL READY WRITING PRACTICE PACKET - REGION

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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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UIL READY WRITING PRACTICE PACKET - REGION



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For official UIL Constitution and Contest Rules for Ready Writing, please review Section 940 on the document under "Contest Rules" at: <http://www.uiltexas.org/academics/ready-writing>

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:

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.

Ready Writing Regional Test

REG-5

Topic I

"My dog doesn't worry about the meaning of life. She may worry if she doesn't get her breakfast, but she doesn't sit around worrying about whether she will get fulfilled or liberated or enlightened. As long as she gets some food and a little affection, her life is fine. But we human beings are not like dogs. We have self-centered minds which get us into plenty of trouble. If we do not come to understand the error in the way we think, our self-awareness, which is our greatest blessing, is also our downfall.

To some degree we all find life difficult, perplexing, and oppressive. Even when it goes well, as it may for a time, we worry that it probably won't keep on that way. Depending on our personal history, we arrive at adulthood with very mixed feelings about this life. If I were to tell you that your life is already perfect, whole, and complete just as it is, you would think I was crazy. Nobody believes his or her life is perfect. And yet there is something within each of us that basically knows we are boundless, limitless. We are caught in the contradiction of finding life a rather perplexing puzzle which causes us a lot of misery, and at the same time being dimly aware of the boundless, limitless nature of life. So we begin looking for an answer to the puzzle..."

Charlotte Joko Beck, *Everyday Zen: Love and Work*, 1989

Topic II

"Without realizing it, we fill important places in each other's lives. It's that way with a minister and congregation. Or with the guy at the corner grocery, the mechanic at the local garage, the family doctor, teachers, neighbors, co-workers. Good people, who are always "there," who can be relied upon in small, important ways. People who teach us, bless us, encourage us, support us, uplift us in the dailiness of life. We never tell them. I don't know why, but we don't.

And, of course, we fill that role ourselves. There are those who depend on us, watch us, learn from us, take from us. And we never know. Don't sell yourself short. You may never have proof of your importance, but you are more important than you think. There are always those who couldn't do without you. The rub is that you don't always know who."

Robert Fulghum, *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*, 1986