

Texas UIL
Ready Writing



state practice packet
high school



UIL READY WRITING PRACTICE PACKET - STATE

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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 - STATE



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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 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 State Test STX-5

Topic I

"Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-imposed nonage. Nonage is the inability to use one's own understanding without another's guidance. This nonage is self-imposed if its cause lies not in lack of understanding but in indecision and lack of courage to use one's own mind without another's guidance. *Sapere aude* [Dare to know]! 'Have the courage to use your own understanding,' is therefore the motto of the enlightenment.

Laziness and cowardice are the reasons why such a large part of mankind gladly remain minors all their lives, long after nature has freed them from external guidance. They are the reasons why it is so easy for others to set themselves up as guardians. It is so comfortable to be a minor. If I have a book that thinks for me, a pastor who acts as my conscience, a physician who prescribes my diet, and so on— then I have no need to exert myself. I have no need to think, if only I can pay; others will take care of that disagreeable business for me. Those guardians who have kindly taken supervision upon themselves see to it that the overwhelming majority of mankind— among them the entire fair sex— should consider the step to maturity, not only as hard, but as extremely dangerous. First, these guardians make their domestic cattle stupid and carefully prevent the docile creatures from taking a single step without the leading-strings to which they have fastened them. Then they show them the danger that would threaten them if they should try to walk by themselves. Now this danger is really not very great; after stumbling a few times they would, at last, learn to walk. However, examples of such failures intimidate and generally discourage all further attempts.

Thus it is very difficult for the individual to work himself out of the nonage which has become almost second nature to him. He has even grown to like it, and is at first really incapable of using his own understanding because he has never been permitted to try it. Dogmas and formulas, these mechanical tools designed for reasonable use— or rather abuse— of his natural gifts, are the fetters of an everlasting nonage. The man who casts them off would make an uncertain leap over

the narrowest ditch, because he is not used to such free movement. That is why there are only a few men who walk firmly, and who have emerged from nonage by cultivating their own minds."

Immanuel Kant, "What is Enlightenment?," 1784

Topic II

"When a scientist runs an experiment, there are all sorts of results that could happen. Some results are positive and some are negative, but all of them are data points. Each result is a piece of data that can ultimately lead to an answer.

And that's exactly how a scientist treats failure: as another data point.

This is much different than how society often talks about failure. For most of us, failure feels like an indication of who we are as a person.

Failing a test means you're not smart enough. Failing to get fit means you're undesirable. Failing in business means you don't have what it takes. Failing at art means you're not creative. And so on.

But for the scientist, a negative result is not an indication that they are a bad scientist. In fact, it's quite the opposite. Proving a hypothesis wrong is often just as useful as proving it right because you learned something along the way.

Your failures are simply data points that can help lead you to the right answer."

James Clear, "Treat Failure Like a Scientist," 2015, from the
Huffington Post