

## Elementary School (4-5) Informative Writing Prompts

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## IntelliMetric® Prompts

### **A Clumsy Mistake**

Everyone has made a clumsy mistake in the past such as falling down at the worst possible time or spilling something on a favorite shirt. Have you ever made a clumsy mistake? How did everyone around you react? Were people involved embarrassed, or did everyone have a good laugh?

In a detailed essay, write about a time when you did something clumsy.

### **A Day at Home**

Imagine that a major storm is in your area, and all school and work is canceled for the day. You and your family now have a chance to spend the day together at home. What are some fun activities you would do to make this day special?

In a well-developed essay, describe the activities that you would do with your family on a day that you have off from school and work because of a major storm. Include examples and details to support your description.

### **Ancient Civilizations**

Think about an ancient civilization you have studied. What was life like? How was it similar to life today? How was it different?

Write an essay in which you describe the civilization you chose and compare it to life today.

### **An Empty Room**

There is an empty room in your school that is not currently being used. There are many ways that this room could be used.

What do you think would be the best way to use this room? Explain to your principal how you would recommend using this room and how you feel it would benefit the students. Be sure to use specific details in describing the room and how it would be used.

### **A New Student**

There is a new fifth grade student at your school who grew up in another country. What should this student do to be successful in fifth grade?

Explain what this student should do and how this student should act in order to be successful in fifth grade.

### **A Person You Admire**

Think of a person whom you look up to and admire. What do you admire about this person? How has this person had an influence on you?

Explain why you chose this person, what qualities you admire in this person, and explain how this person has influenced you.

### **Being a Responsible Student**

While speaking to a group of our nation's students in 2009, President Barack Obama said the following: "But at the end of the day, we can have the most dedicated teachers, the most supportive parents, and the best schools in the world-and none of it will matter unless all of you fulfill your responsibilities."

As a student, how can you fulfill the responsibilities President Obama discusses? For example, can you complete your homework, be respectful to your classmates, or help your teacher(s) with tasks in the classroom?

Write a detailed, multi-paragraph letter to the president describing how you are a responsible student or what you plan to do to become a more responsible student. Be as descriptive and detailed as possible.

### **Compare and Contrast a Product**

A comparison and contrast essay is one in which the writer identifies the similarities and differences between two people, places, things, or ideas in order to inform, persuade, or express an opinion. Select two different brands of a product that you use or enjoy (e.g., two different magazines, brands of potato chips, types of candy, etc.). Think about how these products are the same yet different.

In a multi-paragraph essay, compare and contrast the two brands of the product you selected. Include facts and details to support your discussion.

### **Create an Animal**

Create a new animal that could live in one of the regions of your state. Your animal must have physical and behavioral characteristics that will allow it to survive in the region's environment.

In a multi-paragraph essay, describe a new animal and the characteristics that allow it to survive in one of your state's regions. Include details that will enable the reader to picture and understand your animal.

### **Creating a New Candy Bar**

The Hershey Company was founded on February 9, 1894. Since that date, they have created many types of candy bars. If the president of The Hershey Company asked you to create a new Hershey's candy bar, what would it be? What ingredients would you put into it? How would you package it and name it?

In a well-developed essay, describe the new candy bar that you would create for The Hershey Company. Include details to support your description.

### **Dressing for Halloween**

Imagine that you are hosting a large Halloween party and have invited all of your friends to the party. What costume would you choose to wear, and what would you like to see your friends and family dressed as? In a detailed essay, discuss the Halloween costumes at your party.

### **Favorite Cartoon or Animated Movie Character**

Think about a cartoon or animated movie character that you like. It can be from a past or current cartoon or animated film. Why do you like this character? Do character strengths or weaknesses make her/him likable?

Write a detailed essay about a specific cartoon or animated feature film character that you like, and explain why he/she is your favorite.

### **Favorite Character**

Imagine you could be a character in any book. What character would you choose to be? If you could be this character, how would your life be different?

### **Favorite Dessert**

Your local newspaper is having a contest to see who can write the most effective description of a favorite dessert. Write an entry for the newspaper contest in which you describe your favorite dessert. Remember to describe the dessert clearly so the judges will know exactly what it is like.



### **Favorite Pet**

Think about a pet you own or would like to own. Before you begin to write, think about what the pet looks like, how it feels, what type of sound it makes, and how it acts. Now write a letter to a friend that describes your favorite pet.

### **Favorite Toy**

In the story *The Velveteen Rabbit*, the Skin Horse says to the Velveteen Rabbit, "When a child loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with, but really loves you, then you become real."

Write about the one toy you have had at any time in your life that you have loved the most.

### **Greek Mythological Figure for a Day**

A unit on Greek Mythology would include various Greek mythological figures, such as Zeus, Aphrodite, Apollo, Athena, Hades, and Cronus. Think about the unique characteristics of the Greek mythological figures, such as their personalities, their symbols, and what they represent. Do any of them remind you of yourself? If you could be any Greek mythological figure for a day, which one would you choose and why?

In a detailed essay, explain why you chose this particular Greek mythological figure, including what you like about him or her.

### **Handling a Bully**

Almost everyone has had to deal with a situation involving a bully. School districts, teachers, and parents have become more aware of the amount of bullying that occurs and the effect it has on students. What are different ways that a bullying situation can be handled? When do parents and teachers need to get involved?

In a well-developed essay, discuss different ways that bullying situations at school can be handled. Include facts, details, and examples to support your discussion.

### **How Can You Help Our World?**

Each and every person is responsible for looking after our world. Think about how you could help protect our environment, such as the air, water, plant life, or wildlife.

Write a multi-paragraph essay describing how you could take better care of our world. Make sure to use specific examples and details to support your response.

### **Ideal Field Trips**

Field trips can help students learn more about the things they learn in class. If you could choose a field trip for you and your class, where would you go? Describe the field trip you would plan for your class. Explain what things you would do, and what you might learn on the field trip.

### **Invent a Holiday**

Each year, the average American celebrates more than fifteen different holidays. Imagine that you have been asked to help create a special holiday just for your town. What would your new holiday include and why would the town want to celebrate it?

Write a multi-paragraph essay describing your new holiday and why the town should adopt it. Be sure to include specific details to help support your idea.

### **Make One Wish**

If you could be granted any wish in the world, what would it be? Would you use this wish on friends and family or would you use it to get something you have always wanted?

In a detailed essay, describe what you would wish for and why you would choose to make his wish.

### **My Favorite Season**

As one season changes into another, we look forward to enjoying different activities and weather conditions with friends and family. The four seasons of winter, fall, spring, and summer offer unique and fun ways to experience life. Do you have a favorite season? Is it because of the weather or the activities you can enjoy during this time of year?

In a well-developed essay, describe the reasons for your choice of a favorite season. Include details to support your description.

### **Science Week**

It is Science Week at your school. Think about a science topic you are interested in. Write a report about this science topic. Before you begin to write think about why the topic is important and be sure to include facts in your report, not just your own opinions. Remember you want to teach your classmates about this topic.

**The Joy of Being a Kid**

Many kids are in a hurry to grow up. However, being young has many benefits. What do you like most about being a kid?

Write a multi-paragraph essay in which you discuss the best part of being a kid. Make sure to include specific details and examples to support your response.

**Toy You Love**

Think about a favorite toy you have now or had when you were younger. Describe the toy and tell why it is your favorite.

**What Do You Value?**

Some people say that the most valuable things in life aren't material things like money, jewels, or cars, but rather emotions like friendship, love, and happiness.

Do you agree with this statement? Write an essay that convinces your classmates which kinds of things are more valuable and why. Be sure to give specific reasons and examples.

**What I like Best About School...**

What do you like best about school? Write an essay in which you discuss your favorite thing about school. Be sure to give specific examples and details.

## Pilot Prompts

### **Advertising Brochure (pilot)**

A marketing company has hired you to come up with an advertisement brochure to sell a product. The brochure you write will be handed to customers at the check-in desk when they arrive at a hotel. Decide on a product, vacation attraction, or event that you could promote and advertise for this company. Be creative—it could be a soft drink, a restaurant, an amusement park, a ride in the park with horses, a celebration, another vacation location, etc.

Write a multi-paragraph advertisement brochure for a product of your choice. Include details that will make your advertisement exciting so that your audience will want to buy the product.

### **A Field Trip Letter (pilot)**

You are a teacher of twenty elementary-aged students. You and your students will be taking a field trip to a local museum next month. The students will be responsible for the cost of transportation, the museum admission fee, and a pre-paid lunch. Since students always look forward to visiting the museum gift shop, you will have to inform parents that their children may wish to have some extra spending money.

As a teacher, write a letter to parents informing them of an upcoming field trip to a local museum. In the letter, include highlights of the exhibits students will visit, the cost of the trip to students, and the possible need for spending money for the museum gift shop.

### **An Important Special Event (pilot)**

Think about a special event you experienced. Write to explain the event and why it was important to you.

### **An Item You Would Like to Have (pilot)**

What is one item you would like to have? Write to describe the item and explain why you want it.

### **Artwork Worthy of a Medal of High Honor (pilot)**

An artist just received a medal of high honor for his artwork. The artwork is to be permanently displayed in the White House. If you were the artist, what would you have created to receive such high recognition? Explain.

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### **A Time of Hope (pilot)**

We have all experienced a time when we have hoped for something to happen or not happen. When have you been hopeful? What did you hope for?

In a detailed essay, explain a time when you were hopeful and describe the outcome. Be sure to use facts, details, and examples for support.

### **A Time You Were Kind (pilot)**

Think about a time you were kind. Write to describe the situation and what happened as a result of your kindness.

### **Best Way to Use Land (pilot)**

Your class has been given the job of deciding what to do with three large pieces of land, each the same size as your playground. One piece is in the city, one is in the suburbs, and the last one is in the country. Make a decision about the best way to use each piece of land, and give reasons why you chose to use the land that way.

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### **Biography of an Early Explorer (pilot)**

Research the life of an early explorer. Find out when the explorer was born, how long they lived, and what contributions they made to our history.

Write a multi-paragraph biography on an early explorer. Be sure to include plenty of details in your essay so readers can learn about the life of the explorer you choose.

### **"Block City" and Childhood Pastimes (pilot)**

In "Block City" the poet Robert Louis Stevenson describes how the speaker uses his or her imagination to play a favorite game. We all have fond memories of a game or pastime we enjoyed as children. Write a composition about your favorite childhood activity.

**Block City**  
**Robert Louis Stevenson**

What are you able to build with your blocks?  
 Castles and palaces, temples and docks.  
 Rain may keep raining, and other go roam,  
 But I can be happy and building at home.  
 Let the sofa be mountains, the carpet be sea,  
 There I'll establish a city for me:  
 A church and a mill and a palace beside,  
 And a harbor as well where my vessels may ride.  
 Great is the palace with pillar and wall,  
 A sort of a tower on the top of it all,  
 And steps coming down in an orderly way  
 To where my toy vessels lie safe in the bay.  
 This one is sailing and that one is moored:  
 Hark to the song of the sailors on board!  
 And see on the steps of my palace, the kings  
 Coming and going with presents and things!  
 Now I have done with it, down let it go!  
 All in a moment the town is laid low.  
 Block upon block lying scattered and free,  
 What is there left of my town by the sea?  
 Yet as I saw it, I see it again,  
 The church and the palace, the ships and the men,  
 And as long as I live and where'er I may be,  
 I'll always remember my town by the sea.

**Bus Created for Kids (pilot)**

Imagine you are going on a field trip in a bus created especially for kids. Describe this bus and explain why kids will like it.

**Business Letter about a Tickets Problem (pilot)**

There may be a time when you must write a business letter to either ask for something or have a problem resolved. For example, if you have ordered tickets for a show at a local theater, and there is a problem with the tickets, you might need to send a business letter to the theater to get the problem resolved.

Write a clear and concise business letter to the Cheyenne Frontier Theater ticket office to resolve a problem with tickets you ordered (e.g., you received an incorrect number of tickets, were assigned seats in the wrong section, etc.). Be sure to include all important information and maintain a business tone throughout your letter.

### **Changing the Direction of a Moving Object (pilot)**

There is a meteor moving toward Earth. If it hits the planet, it will cause terrible destruction. Luckily, you know that the way to change the direction of something that is moving is by giving it a push or a pull. Write a letter to the secretary general of the United Nations telling her about the meteor, and give her two ways to change the direction of this moving object.

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### **Class Gift to Your School (pilot)**

Traditionally, the graduating class gives a gift to the school it is leaving. The gift usually has meaning for the class, and in some way, enhances the school. What gift would you suggest that your class donate to your school? What is the meaning behind the gift?

In a multi-paragraph essay, discuss the gift that you would suggest your class give to your school. Include the significance of the gift and its value to the school to support your discussion.

### **Create a School Rule (pilot)**

Imagine one day at school you are allowed to create a rule for students to follow. Explain the rule you create and why you choose to make that rule. Be sure to include details.

### **Describe a Fun, Educational Game (pilot)**

Playing a game can be educational as well as fun. Think about a game that teaches you something while you are having fun. Write about this game and explain why it is both fun and educational.

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### **Describe a Lighthouse (pilot)**

Lighthouses have protected sailors for centuries. They are unique in their size and color and protect those traveling on nearby waters from danger.

In a multi-paragraph essay, describe a lighthouse you have researched. Include details on its location, height, color, signal distance, year, why it was built, years of operation, interesting stories in its history, and its status as a tourist site.

### **Describe an Invention (pilot)**

Inventions are created to fill a specific or unique need. Some inventions make our lives easier, and some inventions make our lives more enjoyable.

In a multi-paragraph essay, discuss an invention and how it affects our lives. Include facts and details to support your discussion.

### **Describe Someone Who is Brave (pilot)**

Think of someone who is brave. Write to describe this person and explain how he or she shows bravery.

### **Describing a Rectangular Prism (pilot)**

Imagine you were a tiny ladybug who accidentally flew into a gift store. You found yourself trapped inside a music box, the shape of a rectangular prism. Luckily, you have your laptop with you, and you can e-mail a friend to come and help you escape. Write a description of your rectangular prism, describing all its faces, edges, and vertices. Remember, there are many other music boxes in the store, but only one in the shape of a rectangular prism, so be sure to describe it in detail for your friend.

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### **Design a Teacher (pilot)**

A teacher can inspire and influence our lives in many ways. The best teachers are the ones who help us to be better than we are and to learn and grow. If you could take the best parts of all of the teachers you have had and put them into one teacher, what would that teacher be like?

Write an essay in which you design your own teacher by combining all of what you think would be the best traits. Explain the qualities that make your teacher the best, including details that describe his or her teaching methods.

### **Doing a Good Job (pilot)**

Think about a person you know who does a good job in his or her profession. This person may be an entertainer, an athlete, a character in a story, or simply a successful family member.

Write a multi-paragraph essay describing why you think this individual is so good at his or her job. Make sure to include specific examples and details to support your response.



**Early European Settlers' Effect on the Americas (pilot)**

In the late 1400s, Europeans started settling what would later become North and South America. This began the movement of people, plants, animals, and diseases across the Atlantic Ocean. The movement brought about many changes for the native people and their land—some for the worst and some for the better.

In a multi-paragraph essay, discuss how the arrival of the Europeans in the 1400s had an effect on the natives of the Americas. Include facts and details to support your discussion.

**Earning Money in *Where the Red Fern Grows* (pilot)**

In *Where the Red Fern Grows*, Billy works several jobs to earn enough money to buy his beloved hounds, Old Dan and Little Ann. What would you do to earn money to buy something you wanted? Where would you be willing to work?

In a well-developed essay, discuss what you would do to earn money to buy something special. Include facts and details to support your discussion.

**Effects of Weather and Natural Disasters (pilot)**

Dangerous weather events or natural disasters like hurricanes, tornados, and landslides can do major damage to our homes and can drastically alter the environment and our lives.

After researching a severe weather event or a natural disaster, write a multi-paragraph essay about the conditions that caused it and the effect it had on people and the environment. Include facts and details that allow the reader to fully understand the weather or disaster and its consequences.

**Everyday Uses for Math (pilot)**

We often think about math as a subject that is used in school, but we actually use math every day outside of school. From the minute we wake in the morning, we use math and numbers for common activities including chores, games, and our daily routine.

In a detailed essay, describe some of the ways that you use math in your daily life.

**Exciting Event That Makes Time "Fly" (pilot)**

There is a saying that time goes by quickly when you are having fun. Write about an exciting event in which the time seemed to go by faster than usual.

### **Exploring Outer Space (pilot)**

Think about the information that you've read in the "Astronomy" unit. Select one major scientific invention that has made it possible for people to explore outer space.

Write a multiple-paragraph informational article in which you identify and explain how this invention contributed to our advancement in space. Plan and organize your article around three or four main points with supporting facts, details, examples, and explanations.

### **Favorite Game (pilot)**

We all enjoy playing games during our free time. Simple or hard, they can consist of board games, video games, word games, etc., and unlike sports, don't always require a team. What game do you like to play? What is your favorite thing about it? Can you play the game with others or only by yourself?

Write a well-developed essay about a game you like to play. Include details that will help the reader understand the reasons why you enjoy the game.

### **Favorite Number (pilot)**

Some people have numbers that they think are lucky. Others have special numbers that represent something special such as a birth date or address. What is your favorite number and why?

Write a well-developed essay in which you select your favorite number and explain why that number is your favorite. Be sure to provide details and examples.

### **Favorite Place to Vacation or Visit (pilot)**

Most of us have a favorite place to vacation or visit. Before you write, think about the one place that is your favorite. In a detailed essay, explain why that place is your favorite to vacation or visit, using reasons and evidence from your own knowledge and experience to support your explanation.

### **Favorite Type of Entertainment (pilot)**

There are many different kinds of entertainment, such as music, games, books, or movies. Explain your favorite type of entertainment and why you like it.

### **Food in Our Lives (pilot)**

Family, friends, teachers, and coaches often talk to us about nutrition and healthy eating habits. Today, there is also much concern about youth obesity. This concern is causing changes in school

cafeteria offerings in some school districts. How do you make sure you are getting the nutrients that you need to grow and stay healthy? Have you ever made different food choices to keep a healthy diet? How do you know which foods are better for you?

In a well-developed essay, discuss the importance of eating healthy food and your own food choices. Include facts, details, and examples to support your discussion.

### **Friendship Song Analysis (pilot)**

Friendship is a very important part of growing up, and as children, we are always making new friends. After listening to the traditional song "Make New Friends" and reading the lyrics of the song, think about what the song means and how it relates to your life.

In a detailed essay, explain what you think the song means about friendship, and include relevant information about some of your new and old friends and why they are your friends.

### **Galactic Pen Pal (pilot)**

Imagine that you have been chosen to participate in a letter-writing program with a student from another planet. Your new pen pal's life is very different from your life as a human, and she or he is very curious about your planet Earth.

Write a letter to your new galactic pen pal in which you describe your life on Earth. What are the people, animals, and plants like? What makes life on Earth special? Be sure to use specific details and examples to make your letter interesting to the readers.

### **Helping Others (pilot)**

People often help one another. Write to explain how you or someone you know helps others.

### **How a Video Can Help (pilot)**

Videos like those in the *Bridging the Gap* series give students ideas on how to handle real-life situations that might be difficult. Some examples are how you can handle disagreements or control your anger. What situation was discussed in the video you viewed? What new information did you learn that you can use in the future?

In a well-developed essay, discuss the situation that the video presented and how information from the video will help you handle a similar situation in the future. Include facts and details to support your discussion.

**How Do You Spend Your Summer Vacation? (pilot)**

Every year, everybody looks forward to the end of school and the beginning of summer vacation. Everyone, however, spends his/her summer differently. Some go to camp or travel with their families, while others just relax at home or spend time with friends. How do you usually spend your summer?

In a detailed essay, describe what you typically do on your summer vacation. Be sure to include details to support your description.

**How to Cook an Item of Your Choice (pilot)**

Imagine a student from a different country is visiting you, and she loves American food. She would like to learn to cook an American dish and has asked you to write directions for cooking your favorite typical American dish (e.g., macaroni and cheese, pizza, hot dogs, chef salad, etc.).

Write directions for cooking your favorite American dish in a multi-paragraph essay. Be sure to include all ingredients and step-by-step instructions for cooking the dish.

**Human Effect on the Environment (pilot)**

Some human activities like farming, recreation, large land development, oil drilling, and mining can have positive and negative effects on the environment. All of these activities are taking place in the United States every day. What effect can human activity have on the physical environment of the United States?

In a multi-paragraph essay, discuss the effect that human activity can have on the physical environment of the United States. Be sure to include facts, details, and examples to support your discussion.

**If I Had Magical Powers (pilot)**

Bewitched was a popular television show in the mid-1960s to early 1970s that was made into a 2005 major motion picture starring Will Ferrell and Nicole Kidman. On the show, the main character, Samantha, lives a normal, everyday life, but in reality, she is really a witch with magical powers. What if you had magical powers like Samantha? What type of magical power, like flying, casting spells, being invisible, or reading people's minds, would you choose? How would your life be different with this special ability?

In a well-developed essay, describe the magical power you would choose to have and how you would use this power in your everyday life.

### **I'm Not Giving Up (pilot)**

In the story *Riding Freedom*, by Pam Muñoz Ryan, Charlotte has to prove to Frank and James that she can still drive a stagecoach even though she is blind in one eye. Her determination helps her keep her job.

Think about a time when you had to show determination because someone didn't think you could do something. It may have been a sport, making a play, or getting a good grade on a test. Write a detailed essay about a time when you had to show determination. Be sure to use details that tell what you had to do to prove yourself to others.

### **Importance of the Bison to Great Plains Indians (pilot)**

The bison (or buffalo) was important to the Great Plains Indians in many ways. Indians followed bison through their seasonal migrations, performed rituals when hunting and killing them, and used the entire animal for food, clothing, shelter, and weapons.

In a thorough essay, discuss the importance of the bison to the Great Plains Indians. Include facts, details, and examples to support your discussion.

### **Important Object (pilot)**

Think of an object that is important to you. Write to describe this object and explain why it is important.

### **Interpretation of a Photograph (pilot)**

You just saw a photograph of a woman walking through a puddle of mud. Her clothes are wet from the rain, the sky is gray, and she is smiling and laughing. Can you explain what caused her to laugh and smile?

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### **Invent the 51st State (pilot)**

A description of a state would include information on its geography, history, natural resources, and population. If you invented a 51st state, what natural resources would be important for its economy? Where would most of its population be centered? Would it have mountains, plains, or deserts?

In a well-developed essay, describe a 51st state. Include facts and details to support your description.

### **Inventing New Words in *Frindle* (pilot)**

In the book *Frindle*, by Andrew Clements, fifth-grader Nick Allen learns an interesting lesson about words and where they come from. He comes up with the wild idea of inventing his own word for a writing device, and he succeeds in getting his class to call a pen a "frindle." If you could make up a word, what would it be? Would you choose to rename something? How would you get others to use your new word?

In a well-developed essay, make up a new word, explain why you think this is a good word, and write about how you would get others to start using it. Use facts and examples to support your discussion.

### **Learning About an Animal and its Habitat (pilot)**

Animals learn to adapt themselves to their habitats in order to survive in the wild. Their bodies and behaviors change as their environment changes, whether they are predator or prey. Select an animal and research its physical appearance, adaptations to its habitat, and its role in the ecosystem.

In a multi-paragraph essay, describe the animal you have researched. Include details on its appearance, adaptations, habitat, and its role as predator or prey to support your description.

### **Learning About State Capitals (pilot)**

In each U.S. state, there is a city that serves as the center of government and law-making called the state capital. Each capital has its own unique story. Why was it chosen to be the capital? Was its location in the state important? What are highlights of its history?

In a well-developed essay, write about the history and government activities of a state capital. Include facts and details to support your description.

### **Learning from a *Magic School Bus* Video (pilot)**

*The Magic School Bus* video series takes you on exciting adventures while discovering scientific concepts with Ms. Frizzle and her class. What concepts are presented in the video you viewed? How does the class come to realize the scientific principles during their adventure with Ms. Frizzle? What did you learn most after watching this video?

In a well-developed essay, summarize the scientific principles presented and what you learned most after viewing this video.

### **Life Without One of the Five Senses (pilot)**

As humans, we enjoy the five senses of taste, smell, sight, touch, and hearing. If you were told that you had to lose one of these five senses, which would you choose? In a well-developed essay, describe which sense you would choose to lose and what life would be like without that sense. Include examples to support your explanation.

### **Life Without Reading (pilot)**

Write about what your life would be like as an adult if you had never learned to read.

### **Make a Wish that Helps Others (pilot)**

If you could make one wish that would help others, what would you wish for and why? Write to explain what wish you would make and how it would help others. Be sure to include details.

### **Making a New Friend (pilot)**

Read this paragraph from a story titled "The New Boy in Town."

David was shocked by his new friend Carl's suggestion. Try out for the play? David had always enjoyed singing and acting- but only in the privacy of his room. Unlike David, Carl sang on the bus, in the cafeteria line, and almost everywhere else he had an audience. David, on the other hand, didn't like to be the center of attention. He preferred to blend in with the crowd. According to Carl, however, David didn't have to try out for one of the lead roles in the play. More importantly, David knew that Carl would continue to bother him about trying out until he agreed. Carl thought being in the play would help David meet more people and make new friends. David just hoped he wouldn't embarrass himself by forgetting his lines or tripping on the steps leading up to the stage. That was not the way he wanted the kids at his new school to get to know him.

Imagine David goes to your school. Think about David's problem. Write about what you would tell David he should do.

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### **Medicine for Healing (pilot)**

The field of medicine is always changing as doctors and scientists learn more about the human body and how to heal illnesses. If you could create a medicine that would heal an illness, what illness would you wish to heal?

Write an essay in which you describe the medicine you would create to heal the illness you have chosen.

### **Moving to a Different Country (pilot)**

*Grandfather's Journey* tells the story of a man who was born in Japan and travels to the United States to live. He finds that he likes living in both Japan and California. Soon he goes back to live in Japan, marries, and then he and his wife move to California. When his daughter is nearly grown, he and his family move back to Japan. Eventually, the man's grandson relives the journeys that his grandfather took between the two countries. If you could move out of the United States, what country would you choose to live in? Why would you choose that country?

In a well-developed essay, choose a different country in which you would like to live, and discuss the reasons for your choice. Use facts and details for support.

### **Museum Exhibits (pilot)**

Visiting a museum is an excellent choice for a field trip. Museums can be educational and fun. Exhibits in museums can range from learning about Cleopatra's reign over Egypt to viewing Picasso's paintings. Imagine your class is taking a field trip to a museum. What particular exhibit would you like to see?

In a detailed essay, describe the features of the exhibit you would like to see, and discuss exactly what your class will be viewing and learning about. Be sure to include facts and examples for support.

### **My Special Talent (pilot)**

We all have our own special talent, something we do especially well. Write an essay which describes what it is that you do best. Be sure to give specific examples and details.

### **Observations on a Sealed Box (pilot)**

Your teacher hands you a closed, sealed box and asks you to describe its contents without looking inside it.

In a well-developed essay, describe how you would use your senses to make observations on what is in the box. How would you then use your observations to identify the contents?



### **Opening New Worlds (pilot)**

In *Tomás and the Library Lady*, Tomás finds new worlds to explore in the library. This story is based on the life of Tomás Rivera, the son of a migrant worker who became the first minority chancellor in the University of California educational system. How could exploring in a library change your life? How could it help you succeed in the future?

In a well-developed essay, write about what you would like to explore in a library and how it might change your future. Include details and examples for support.

### **Physical Education Teacher for a Day (pilot)**

At the silent auction, you won an opportunity to be the P.E. teacher for a day. What skills would be in your lesson for the day? Why would you include those skills? Also, explain how you would teach these skills to a third-grade class.

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### **Pictures Taken at School (pilot)**

Your teacher gives you a camera and asks you to take pictures of three things you like at school.

Explain what you take pictures of and why you like these things.

### **Practicing for an Important Event (pilot)**

Think about a time you practiced or prepared for an important event. Write about what happened. Be sure to include details.

### **Presenting Data with a Graph or Chart (pilot)**

Imagine you were the teacher. You wanted to take your students on a field trip. You and your class had the opportunity to visit any of these three places: the aquarium, the science museum, or the wild animal park. Write the story of what you did to gather information from your students to find out which place each person wanted to visit the most. Remember to say what kind of graph or chart you used to present your findings to the class so they knew you were being fair.

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**Read-a-Thon Prize (pilot)**

Imagine your school is having a read-a-thon and the class that reads the most books will be allowed to choose its reward. Your class is going to vote on students' suggestions for the reward. What would you suggest for a reward and why?

In a well-developed essay, describe the reward that you would want your class to win if your class were to read the most books.

**Rebuilding Your Park (pilot)**

The mayor of your town has asked you and your friends to redesign your local park. What will your new community park look like? How could you make it more beautiful and fun?

Write an essay in which you describe your new park. Be sure to use details so the reader can imagine your new park.

**Recommending a Classroom Pet (pilot)**

Your teacher has just informed your class that there will soon be a new classroom pet. Each student is asked to present information to their teacher on an animal that they think would make the best classroom pet. What kind of animal would you suggest? What might be important information for the teacher to know about each animal before making a decision?

Write a multi-paragraph letter to your teacher presenting information about the animal that you believe would be the best classroom pet. You might want to include details about the animal's care, eating habits, and temperament in your letter.

**Reducing Pollution (pilot)**

Harmful substances in the environment are called pollution. Air, water, land, light, noise, and heat pollution can be the result of human or natural causes. What types of pollution occur where you live? How can you help to reduce the amount of pollution?

In a well-developed essay, describe how you and your classmates can help to reduce the amount of pollution where you live. Include facts and details to support your description.

**Regions of a State (pilot)**

Distinct regions are included in the geography of many states. These regions have different natural resources, landforms, and other unique characteristics.

In a multi-paragraph essay, describe the regions of a state. As you describe each region, include information about the natural resources, landforms, major cities, and other unique characteristics.

### **Regions of the United States (pilot)**

The United States is often sectioned into several regions such as, the Northeast, the Southeast, the Midwest, the Southwest, and the Northwest. The states in these regions share many characteristics, and each region differs from the others in distinct ways. If you could choose a region to live in, which would it be? Why would you select that region?

In a well-developed essay, describe the region in which you would choose to live. Include facts and examples to support your choice.

### **Resolution to Keep the Planet Clean (pilot)**

Read these paragraphs from a story titled "My New Year's Resolution."

On the last day of school before winter break, Amy's teacher, Mr. Case, made an announcement.

"Class," he began, "soon it will be the New Year. I'd like each and every one of you to set a new goal for yourself for the coming year. Focus on something you would like to improve. When you have it figured out, write your new goal on a piece of paper and sign your name at the bottom as a pledge to try your hardest to achieve your new goal. This new pledge will be called your New Year's resolution. Keep this paper in your pocket as a reminder of what you have set out to accomplish."

Amy knew right away what her New Year's resolution would be. She would work harder to help keep the planet clean.

Imagine Amy has come to you asking for your help. She wants to know what she can do to help keep the planet clean. Write about the advice you would give her about how to help keep the planet clean.

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### **Ruby Bridges in Rockwell's *The Problem We All Live With* (pilot)**

Think about the Norman Rockwell painting, *The Problem We All Live With*, that shows Ruby as a small child on her way to school. Two large men wearing armbands that say "Deputy U.S. Marshal" are walking ahead of her and two more are behind. "K.K.K." and a racial slur against African Americans are scrawled on the wall, and a tomato has been thrown. Imagine that a visitor to this country who knows nothing about the story of Ruby Bridges asks about the painting. What would you tell this visitor? Write your explanation of what the picture shows and why.

### **Running Your Own Business (pilot)**

There are many reasons why people start their own businesses. Most people open a business to make money, but some businesses are there to help the community. If you had the opportunity to be a business owner, what type of business would you like to start? Would you sell a product or would you provide a service?

Write an essay describing your business and what goals you hope to achieve. Be sure to include details and examples to support your ideas.

### **“Sea-Fever” and Your Special Place (pilot)**

In “Sea-Fever,” the poet John Masefield describes how the speaker feels about his special place, the sea. Each of us has our own special place. Write a composition about your special place.

#### **Sea-Fever John Masefield**

I must go down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky,  
 And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by,  
 And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white sail's shaking,  
 And a gray mist on the sea's face and a gray dawn breaking.  
 I must go down to the seas again, for the call of the running tide  
 Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied;  
 And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds flying,  
 And the flung spray and the blown spume, and the sea-gulls crying.  
 I must go down to the seas again to the vagrant gypsy life,  
 To the gull's way and the whale's way where the wind's like a whetted knife;  
 And all I ask is a merry yarn from the laughing fellow-rover,  
 And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long trick's over.

### **Shape and Use (pilot)**

The shapes of different things are often very important for the use of those things. For example, wheels are round because circles roll smoothly. In a well-developed essay, discuss the relationship between an object, its shape, and its use. Include reasons why the shape is important for its use.

### **Show Something Special to Your Class (pilot)**

Imagine one of your teachers asks you to bring something special to show the class. Write to describe the item and explain why you would like to show it.

**Someone or Something Special to You (Pilot)**

Think of someone or something that is special to you. Write to explain what is special to you and why.

**Something You Would Change About Your School (Pilot)**

Think about something you would like to change about your school. Write to explain what you would change and why.

**Something You Would Like to Learn (pilot)**

Everyone has something that they would like to learn to do. Think about what you would like to learn to do. Now write to explain what you would like to learn to do.

**Speech on a Hobby or Event (pilot)**

There may be occasions in the future when you are called upon to give a speech. Some might be informal, like a toast to a friend at a wedding or celebration; others might be formal and need preparation and practice, like a business presentation. To become familiar with speech writing, imagine you have been invited to give an informative speech on a familiar hobby or event. Your audience will be a group of middle school students.

Write an informative multi-paragraph speech about a familiar hobby or event to be given to a group of middle school students. Include facts and details that will engage your audience.

**State Tourist Brochure (pilot)**

Every state has its own unique character, history, and sites. Write an article for a brochure on your home state which will be given out at the state tourist information center. This article should describe your state's geography, history, sites of interest, etc. Be sure to include specific details and examples in your article.

**Summarize a Current Event (pilot)**

In a well-developed essay, write a summary of a current event. Include facts and details about the event in your summary.

**Summer Vacation Experiences (pilot)**

One of the most common questions friends ask each other after returning from summer break is, “What did you do over the summer?” Think about the things you did to keep busy during the summer.

In a detailed response, highlight some of the things you did this past summer. Use descriptive details to bring your summer experiences to life for the reader.

**Taking Action during a Wildfire (pilot)**

Wildfires can affect many lives. They can happen fast and can quickly become out of control. Often, families have to seek shelter while firefighters bravely try to stop these fires. The government also has to make many important decisions when a wildfire breaks out, like where to put families if they lose their homes.

In a detailed essay, discuss the impact that wildfires have on a community. Be sure to include facts, details, and examples to support your discussion.

**The Culture of Ancient Native American Tribes (pilot)**

There are many Native American tribes that inhabited the land of the United States. Some of these tribes are the Apache, Cherokee, and Hopi. After choosing and researching a tribe, how would you describe its culture? What kind of customs did they have? What did their homes look like?

In a detailed essay, describe various aspects of the culture of a Native American tribe. Include facts and details to support your description.

**The Three Types of Rocks (pilot)**

There are three types of rocks, categorized by the way they form: sedimentary, metamorphic, and igneous. They have many similarities and differences, and knowing how they form helps scientists tell them apart.

In a multi-paragraph essay, discuss what you have learned about the three types of rocks. Include the results of experiments and observations you have done, and describe some of the properties of the rocks to support your discussion.

**Time When You Were Brave (pilot)**

Think about a time when you were brave. Perhaps you had to speak in front of the class, do something that was difficult, or ride a fast roller coaster. Write about what happened. Be specific and include details.

### **Time You Worked Hard for Something (pilot)**

Write about a time you worked hard for something. For example, you may have worked hard to win a game, make money for something, or earn a reward in class. Tell what you did and how you felt.

### **Washington Crossing the Delaware (pilot picture)**



Emanuel Leutze, *Washington Crossing the Delaware*, 1851

The famous painting “Washington Crossing the Delaware” by Emanuel Leutze illustrates an important historic event that took place during the Revolutionary War.

In a multi-paragraph response, describe this painting in detail. In your own words, what does this painting illustrate? Tell your readers whether or not you think this painting is a valuable and important piece of American art.

### **What are You Afraid Of? (pilot)**

Many of us are afraid of something. We have fears that can keep us from doing what we really want to do, and it can make us miserable. What is something that you are afraid of?

Write a multi-paragraph essay describing something you are afraid of. Be sure to include details and examples about why it makes you afraid and what you can do to battle this fear.

### **What Pet Would You Like to Own? (pilot)**

Think about a pet you would like to own. Write to explain what you would choose and why.

### **What Would You Like to Learn to Do? (Pilot)**

What is something you want to learn to do? Explain what you would like to learn and why.

**When Someone Did Something Special for You (pilot)**

Think of a time when someone did something special for you. Perhaps the person sent a card, helped with homework, or cooked a food you like. Write about this time and include details.

**Where Would You Travel? (Pilot)**

Suppose you had the opportunity to travel anywhere you wanted. Write to explain where you would go and why.

**Who is Your Favorite Teacher? (Pilot)**

Who is your favorite teacher? Write to describe which teacher you like best and explain what makes him or her special.

**Winning an Award (pilot)**

If you could win an award for doing anything, such as singing, acting, or accomplishing something that would make the world a better place, what would it be for and why? Why would winning this award be special to you?

In a detailed essay, describe something for which you would like to receive an award. Include the reasons for your choice to support your description.

**Write About a Trip You Have Taken (pilot)**

Think about a trip you went on with your class, family, friends, or a group. Write about what happened on the trip.

**Young Heroes (pilot)**

People of all ages can be heroes. Think of a time when someone your age did something that you thought was heroic. What did the person do? How was this action heroic?

In a well-developed essay, describe a heroic act performed by a person your age and give reasons why you think that action was heroic.



**Your Favorite Place to Eat (pilot)**

Think of your favorite place to eat. The location could be at home, school, a park, a restaurant, or another place. Write to explain why this is your favorite place to eat.

**Your Favorite School Event (Pilot)**

Imagine a local newspaper reporter wants to know about your favorite school event. Write to describe the event and explain why it is your favorite.

**Your Favorite Year in School (pilot)**

Think about your favorite year in school. Was it kindergarten, first grade, second grade, or another grade? Write to explain why the year you chose was your favorite.

**Your State's Geography (pilot)**

Each state has unique geographic features and landmarks. If you were able to fly over your state, would you look down on mountains or deserts? How many other states could you see touching your state's borders? Would you see rivers or lakes?

In a well-developed essay, describe the geographical features that you would look down on as you fly over your state. Include facts and details to support your description.