

## High School (9-12) Informative Writing Prompts

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## IntelliMetric® Prompts

### **A Dinner Menu**

You are preparing a dinner menu to celebrate a special occasion and need to decide what food you will serve to your friends.

Describe each of the foods you will include on your menu and explain why you made the choices you did. Describe how you will present the meal to your friends.

### **A Healthy Change**

We often fail to realize that the choices we make about our health can be unhealthy ones. Lifestyle choices affect our long-term health as well as our risk for disease.

Imagine that you could change things about your lifestyle that would make you healthier. Describe what these changes would be and how they would benefit you and make our society a healthier one.

### **A Letter to Your Grandchildren: The World Today**

Today's world is radically different from the world into which your grandparents were born and lived their lives. Profound changes in the economy, social atmosphere, and technological realm have occurred over the last few decades. You may recall stories that your grandparents told you about the world in which they lived. Can you imagine the stories about your world that you will one day recount to your grandchildren?

In a well-written essay, write a letter to your grandchildren that they will open in fifty years in which you describe what the world is like right now. Be sure to include specific details and examples to make it vivid for your readers.

### **A Moment in History**

By the time students enter high school, they have learned about many moments in history that have influenced our world today. Think about a moment in history you studied and consider its importance.

Write a composition in which you discuss a moment in history. Share its importance in today's world. Be sure to support the moment with details and examples.

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## **A Revolution's Effect on Society**

What is a revolution? How does a revolution affect the people and society in which it takes place?

In a well-developed essay, define revolution and describe the effect that a particular revolution had on the people and society of the time period in which it took place. Include facts and details to support your description.

## **Acting on the State of the Union Address**

The State of the Union is an annual message that the President of the United States addresses to Congress, which is publicly viewed on television by millions of people. It is emulated from the Speech from the Throne in the United Kingdom, which is given by the ruling monarch.

According to the Constitution, the President "shall from time to time give to Congress information of the State of the Union and recommend to their Consideration such measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient" (Article II, Section 3). It is used to discuss the accomplishments fulfilled in the previous year and to delineate the President's legislative plan for the upcoming year. The speech frequently includes important matters such as economic health, national security, the housing industry, healthcare, and education.

Writing a well-developed essay as the President of the United States, discuss how you would plan and implement legislation on one of the topics mentioned above to benefit our country in the coming year.

## **Advice to a Presidential Candidate**

As the U.S. Presidential election season heats up, the voices of America's diverse citizenry cry out, expressing the people's needs, opinions, and visions for the future. In the midst of all these competing voices, the Presidential candidates have to carefully consider what they say in return. Imagine that you have the opportunity to speak privately to the candidate of your choice before he or she makes an important speech. What would you tell him or her to say to America?

In a multi-paragraph essay, discuss the advice you would give to a presidential candidate on a speech to be made to the American public. Include facts and details to support your discussion.

## **African Imperialism**

Did the rise of nineteenth-century imperialism in Africa have more positive or negative effects? How did these effects transform the continent and the lives of its people?

In a well-developed essay, describe the effects of nineteenth-century imperialism in Africa. Include historical and present day effects to support your description.

## **American Presidents**

The United States of America has had 43 presidents, all with various strengths and weaknesses. In a multi-paragraph essay, explain who you think was the best American president and why. Make sure to include specific examples and details to support your argument and why.

## **An Ethical Dilemma: Job Recommendation**

Imagine that your friend has come to you asking for your help in getting a job at your place of employment. While you know that your friend is not a hard worker and you don't want his/her poor performance on the job to reflect on you, you also don't want to let your friend down because you know he/she needs the money.

In a multi-paragraph essay, describe how you would handle this dilemma. Would you recommend your friend for a job, even though you know he or she would not be a good employee? Be sure to include specific details and examples to support your decision.

## **Biography of an Author**

Choose an author that you like or one that you would like to learn more about. Then, in a detailed essay, write about this particular author's life. What were some of this author's most significant literary works? What are the most prominent parts of the author's life? What were the times like in which this author lived?

In a detailed and well-developed essay, write about the life and times of a particular author of your choice.

## **Business Letter to a Restaurant**

Think about your most recent meal at your favorite restaurant. What were the positive and negative aspects of the meal? How could the restaurant further improve its food and service?

Write a letter to the manager of your favorite restaurant in which you provide comments and suggestions regarding the restaurant, service, or food. As you write your letter, be sure to use a format and tone appropriate for a business letter.

## **Career Goals**

Upon graduating from high school, it is important for students to think about their plans for the future, whether they include additional schooling, joining the workforce, or some other activity.

Think about what you would like your career to be after you graduate from high school. In a well-developed essay, state your career goals for the next five years and explain your plans to achieve these goals.

### **Cause and Effect in the Revolutionary War**

Show that you understand and can explain the concept of "cause and effect" as it relates to historical events. The events leading up to the outbreak of the American Revolutionary War contain many examples of cause and effect. These can also be seen as instances of action-reaction between the British and the American colonists. Select and describe three examples of cause and effect that led to the outbreak of the Revolutionary War in 1775.

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### **Change A Historical Event**

History is full of events that many people wish had different outcomes, such as battles, wars, and assassinations. If you could go back in time and change a historic event, what would you change, and how would that alter history from that time forward? In a well-developed essay, describe your changes to a historic event and its resulting impact on history.

### **Character Traits**

Character traits in fictional or real people may have positive or negative effects on the people around them.

Select a person, real or fictional, who possesses character traits that influence others in a positive or negative way. Write an essay in which you describe this person's character traits and provide examples of how these traits affect other people.

### **Choose a New Genetic Trait**

The Human Genome Project identified thousands of known human genes, yet there are still many unanswered questions about the extent of genetic control of many human traits. If you could choose a human trait to be genetically controlled, what trait would you choose? Would it be a physical trait? Would it be a personality trait? How would it be transmitted from parent to child?

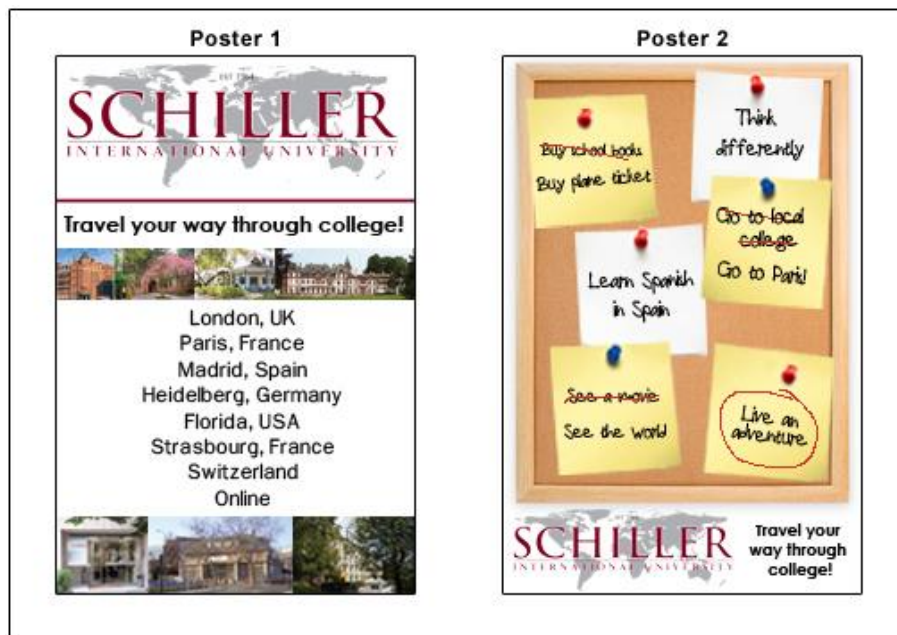
In a well-developed essay, describe a human trait that you would like to be genetically controlled and the manner in which it is transmitted between generations.

## Choosing a Speaker for Your School

You have been selected to invite a special guest to speak at your school. You can choose a person who is real or fictional from the past or present. What life experiences has this person had? What would they talk about? What do you hope the school would learn from the person you selected?

Write a multi-paragraph essay describing the person you chose to speak at your school. Be sure to include details and examples to support why this person should speak at your school.

## Choosing the Right College Recruiting Poster



Imagine that you have been asked by your school counselor to choose a college recruiting poster to hang in your school. Consider the two posters carefully, noting how they are both similar and different. Click [here](#) to view the picture. Pay special attention to how the words and images are used to convey the marketing messages.

Which poster would you choose to hang in your school? Why does the poster you chose appeal more effectively to students in your age group? Be sure to support your choice with specific references to the words, images, and layouts of the posters.

## College Admissions: Controversial Social Issues

As we mature into young adults and pursue higher education, controversial social issues often begin to grab our attention and affect our view of the world. Whether we choose to give up eating meat, avoid wearing furs, or stop driving gas-guzzling SUVs, most of us will eventually take a stand on a

controversial social issue and examine, if not change, an important facet of our life. What controversial social issue has become important to you?

Write a multi-paragraph essay addressed to an admissions officer in which you discuss a controversial social issue that has become important to you or caused you to rethink how you live your life. Be sure to include specific details and examples to support your ideas.

### **College Admissions: Financial Planning**

As college costs continue to rise faster than the general rate of inflation, young college students are increasingly finding themselves saddled with debt and forced to make complex financial decisions. In response, some colleges now channel freshmen through personal finance seminars in which students learn how to budget, how to understand loan terminology, and how to avoid common financial pitfalls.

Think about the financial challenges you may face when you attend college. You may also want to interview a college student you know about his or her challenging experiences. In an essay addressed to a college financial aid officer, outline the financial challenges you believe you will face as a college student and a plan to deal with them successfully. How can you ensure that you will graduate college in good financial shape?

### **College Admissions: Personal Statement**

When deciding which students to admit, colleges consider many factors about each student. After all, colleges are interested in building a student body that is academically curious, but also diverse and actively engaged in a range of productive, creative activities.

Write a personal statement to be read by a college admissions officer. In this statement, discuss how your academic interests, extracurricular activities, and life experiences will benefit the college community.

### **Community Service Requirement**

High schools across the United States have begun to incorporate community service hours into their graduation requirements. Community service comes in many forms, from repairing houses to tutoring younger students. If you were required to complete community service as part of your graduation requirements, what service would you select?

Write a multi-paragraph essay describing the community service you would choose to perform. Be sure to provide specific reasons and examples to support your choice.

## Comparing Marketing Messages

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Switzerland  
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An education from Schiller International University unlocks the world!

When creating print advertisements, marketing professionals work carefully to combine words and images to convey a specific message to the intended audience. Carefully consider the two advertisements. Click here to view the picture. Notice how they are both similar and different.

In a well-organized essay, compare and contrast the two advertisements. What marketing messages do the words and images in each convey? How would you rate their overall effectiveness? Would one advertisement be more effective with a certain audience? Why or why not? Be sure to support your analysis with reasons and examples drawn from the ads and your studies.

## Creating a Budget

One of the responsibilities of being an adult is managing a budget that allows you to pay for the basic necessities of life. Imagine in a few years that you have just graduated from college and have landed your first job. After taxes you have \$1,500 dollars each month to spend on housing, utilities, food, supplies, and transportation. How exactly would you budget that money to cover those basic

necessities? What things would you be willing to spend more money on? What would you do with extra money?

In a detailed essay, discuss how you would budget \$1,500 each month to cover your expenses and extras. Include examples and reasons to support your budget allocations.

### **Crossing the Rubicon: A Fateful Decision**

"Crossing the Rubicon" is a popular expression that means to go past a point of no return by doing an action so powerful that it is irreversible. It is believed that the phrase originated when Julius Caesar took his armies past the Rubicon Barrier that no general had ever crossed, and marched on to Rome. This was considered an act of war that solidified his power and changed the world forever.

Think of a fateful decision that someone has made that has had a significant and irreversible impact on the world. What was this decision and what was its short-term and long-term impact?

Write an essay explaining the fateful decision you have chosen and why it would be considered "Crossing the Rubicon." Be sure to include specific details and examples to support your response.

### **Describing a Meaningful Holiday**

Cultures all throughout the world celebrate a variety of special and meaningful holidays. These holidays are special because of historic or religious events associated with them, and often include unique traditions. Is there a unique holiday that you celebrate or have always wanted to celebrate? What is it about this holiday that interests you?

In a well-developed essay, describe a holiday that interests you or in which you participate. Include facts and details on the significance of the holiday and its associated traditions to support your description.

### **Designing the Ideal School Building**

It is often said that students are in the best position to decide how a school building should be designed. If you were asked to build the ideal school, what features would you include? Why?

Write an essay to the new school building committee describing the building features included in your ideal school and why you chose to include those features.

### **Effects of Technology**

Technology and the changes it brings can have a very big effect on our lives. Which technological change has had the largest effect on life in this country? Why?

Write an essay explaining the technology you have chosen and how it has affected our lives.

### **Effects of the Automobile**

The automobile is arguably the most important invention of the past several hundred years. How has the automobile affected our culture? What are its most important effects on our lifestyle? Why has the automobile had such a large effect on our culture?

Write an essay to be read by your classroom teacher explaining the influence the automobile has had on our culture and the reasons why.

### **Failure Before Success**

"Before success comes in any man's life he is sure to meet with much temporary defeat and, perhaps, some failures. When defeat overtakes a man, the easiest and most logical thing to do is to quit. That is exactly what the majority of men do." -Napoleon Hill

Many successful men and women would agree with this quote from Napoleon Hill. Those who become successful are not in the majority who quit when defeat "overtakes" them.

In a well-developed essay, relate the importance of not quitting when facing challenges as illustrated by the life of someone successful, and as experienced in your own life. Include details from both lives to support your discussion.

### **Favorite Villain**

"The more successful the villain, the more successful the picture." – Alfred Hitchcock

In the world of film and literature, villains have been used to show the opposite of the hero. Where the hero is strong and makes honorable decisions, the villain is usually self-centered and uses evil to damage the lives of others for his own purposes. Villains sometimes fill us with fear, anger and occasionally sadness. In general, every great tale of a hero also has a villain that we love to hate. Think of your favorite villain from either literature or film. How is he/she an opposite figure to a hero? What character traits make him/her such a great villain?

In a detailed essay, describe your favorite villain and his/her villainous traits. Compare the villain's traits to the hero's traits to support your description.



## Features of a Major World Religion

Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism are frequently considered the five major religions of the world. Each has unique features including its god(s), key beliefs, origins, sacred text, effect on society, and modern day traditions.

In a multi-paragraph essay, discuss several of the unique features of one of the major world religions. Include facts and examples to support your discussion.

## First Day on the Job

Imagine it is your first day at a new job. You want to put your best foot forward because you know that you have only one chance to make a good first impression. How would you accomplish this task?

In a multi-paragraph essay, describe the measures you would take to make a good first impression at your new job. Be sure to include specific details and examples for support.

## Global Warming

Global warming has become an environmental issue of great concern. Nations worldwide have been called on to implement policies designed to decrease carbon dioxide emissions. At a grass roots level, it is possible for individuals to make a difference by making lifestyle changes and taking advantage of new technologies.

In a well-developed essay, describe how you and your family can help reduce carbon dioxide emissions.

## Growing Towards Maturity

*A mature person is one who does not think only in absolutes, who is able to be objective even when deeply stirred emotionally, who has learned that there is both good and bad in all people and all things, and who walks humbly and deals charitably.* -- Eleanor Roosevelt

Maturity is a virtue that we all strive for but often find difficult to obtain. It is a quality that we must acquire at some point in our lives as we become adults. What do you think it means to be a mature person?

Write a well-organized essay in which you describe what you think are some of the qualities that make a person mature. Be sure to include specific examples to support your ideas.

## **Handling Disruptive Behavior**

As a student, you've always experienced a classroom from a student's perspective; however, imagine that you are now the teacher. You are in the middle of teaching the day's lesson, and you have a student who has been disrupting class with inappropriate behavior, such as talking out loud, throwing paper wads, walking around, and not participating with the rest of the class. As the teacher, how would you handle this situation? Would you give detention, send the student to the principal's office, or use some type of creative method to deal with the behavior? Are there classroom management strategies that might prevent situations like this from occurring?

In a detailed essay, discuss how you would deal with this situation. Describe the method(s) you would use to control this student's behavior and classroom management techniques which could prevent this type of behavior.

## **Healthy Relationships**

We experience many types of relationships with our family and friends during our lifetimes. Some of these relationships survive over the years, while others deteriorate. What qualities are important to learn and develop in order to sustain healthy, lasting relationships?

In a well-developed essay, discuss those qualities that you feel contribute to a healthy relationship. Support your answer with specific details or examples from your own experience or reading.

## **Helping a Friend in Math Class**

One of your friends dislikes mathematics and has been doing poorly on homework assignments. He/she has asked you for help.

Write a letter to your friend that provides strategies to be successful in math class. Be sure to provide details and examples.

## **Historical Periods in Time**

Imagine that you have been given the opportunity to go back in time and live during any period in American history. Which decade of American history stands out as one you would like to witness?

Write a multi-paragraph essay discussing which historical time period you would choose and why. Use specific details and examples to support your response.

## **Importance of Family**

Family plays a valuable role in our lives. Family members are there to provide support and lend a helping hand no matter the circumstance. Do you remember a time when you realized just how important it is to have the support of your family? Did you ever have to depend on a family member for a ride home or emotional encouragement?

In a well-developed essay, describe a time when you realized the importance of family or a time when you depended on a family member.

## **In-School Music**

Have you ever noticed that music can affect people's moods? Happy songs, lively songs, and sad songs all give people different feelings or set different moods. Suppose you could choose the background music for your homeroom or another room at school. What music would you choose and why? Would you change the music for different times of day or days of the week?

Write an essay describing the background music you would choose for your homeroom or another room at school. Tell what the music is like and why you would choose that music.

## **Making Science Fiction Real**

In many science fiction movies and television shows, there are futuristic ideas and inventions that we do not have now, but one day hope to enjoy. The idea for cell phones, spaceships, cloning, televisions, and laser tools and weapons existed in science fiction well before their actual creation. In all probability, many of the ideas that are now in movies and television shows will one day be in actual use.

In a detailed essay, describe an invention that you have seen in a movie or television show that you would like to see become reality. Include how its overall use will be beneficial for everyone.

## **Memorable Places**

What place have you visited that you will always remember? It might be close by, or it might be in another part of the world. What was the place like, and why was it special to you?

Choose a place you have visited that was special to you. Write a letter to a friend describing the place and what was special about it. Remember to provide enough details about this place so the reader can picture the place in his or her mind.

## **One-Hundred Years of Change**

Life at the beginning of the twenty-first century is very different from what life was like at the beginning of the twentieth century. Significant changes have occurred in almost every area of life; including space travel, medicine, world politics, communication, and many everyday things we take for granted.

Write an essay describing one significant change that has occurred in the world between 1900 and 2005. Explain the impact this change has made on our lives and why it is an important change.

## **Owning a Business**

If you could operate your own business, what would you choose? It could be anything from a retail enterprise such as a clothing boutique, sporting goods store, or art gallery, to a food service or entertainment business such as a restaurant, coffee shop, or bowling alley.

In a well-developed essay, explain what type of business you would like to own and why. Include details to support your explanation.

## **Perceptions of Prejudice**

Think about a time when you experienced prejudice, either as a victim, perpetrator, or observer. How did this experience change you and your perceptions of others?

Write an essay in which you describe this experience and relate it to the changes you experienced as a result. Be sure to support your exposition with details and insight that make the experience and its results clear to your audience.

## **Power Sources in the Year 2050**

Picture yourself living in the year 2050. Power sources operating in your house have changed.

Describe the new power sources used to make your home run more efficiently. Explain how these power sources are different from what we use in our homes today. Write about the benefits and disadvantages of this new technology and how it will affect future generations.

## **Qualities in Adults You Admire**

Adults have influence on young people's lives. Think about the qualities demonstrated by adults that you admire. Write an essay explaining the most important qualities demonstrated by adults that you admire.

### **Self-Evaluation Reflection**

Reflect on the work you have completed in this class to date. What did you do well? What could you have done better?

Write a multi-paragraph essay analyzing your performance in this class. Discuss your strengths and weaknesses and your goals for improvement. Be sure to include examples and details to support your reflection.

### **The Definition of Integrity**

We each have an idea of what *integrity* means in our head, but actually defining this concept is rather difficult. What does *integrity* mean to you?

Write a multi-paragraph essay in which you articulate your definition of *integrity*. Include specific details and examples from what you have read, heard, and experienced in your interpretation.

### **The Future of Your Chosen Career**

There are many professions or fields from which you can choose a career or job when you complete your education. Think about a profession or type of job that is of interest to you and how you feel it will change in the future. In what ways do you feel this profession or job area will change and why do you feel these changes will occur?

In an essay to be read by your classroom teacher, describe a particular profession or job type, explain how you feel it will change in the future, and present the reasons why.

### **The Holocaust: Systems of Persecution**

In his systematic assault on the peoples of Europe, Adolf Hitler utilized numerous systems to implement the Holocaust. Some of these systems included the wide use of propaganda, the relocation of people to Ghettos, the creation of laws to strip people of their rights, and the use of technology to increase the efficiency of the machinery of genocide.

Choose one of the systems of persecution that was used to implement the Holocaust. Using the Internet, books, or other resources, gather research about this system. Then, write a well-developed essay in which you present this information. Why do you think this system was so important in implementing the Holocaust?

### **The Ideal Winter Break**

Many students look forward to their winter break. It's a time to relax and spend time with family and friends. How would you spend your ideal winter break? Would you go on a winter getaway? Would you play with the new gadgets or gifts received during the holiday season? Would family or friends share in these fun-filled times?

In a well-developed essay, describe your ideal winter break. Be sure to include details on what would be fun or important to you during this particular time of year.

### **The Person You Most Admire**

At a school assembly, the person you most admire is going to speak to the students in your school. You have been chosen to introduce this person to the audience. Who will that person be, and what will you say about that person?

Write an essay introducing the person you choose and describing the person's best qualities. Remember to provide enough details about this person so the reader can picture him or her in their mind.

### **The Sense You Could Live Without**

The five senses are an important part of our daily existence, but many people take them for granted. Many Americans live without one or more of these senses: sight, smell, taste, touch, or hearing. If you had to live without one of these senses, which one would you choose?

### **What Decade Would You Like to Experience?**

Each particular decade in the twentieth century is known for specific fads and events. If you could experience living in any particular decade from the 1920s to the 1990s, which would you choose and why?

In a detailed essay, write about a particular decade you would like to experience and why you would choose this period in time. Include specific events or trends that you would like to experience.

### **What Makes a Person an American?**

Many authors, especially African-American writers such as Alex Haley and Langston Hughes, have used their works to discuss what it truly means to be an American during their lifetimes. Think about this issue and what it means in your own life. In a multi-paragraph essay using details from your own life experiences, explain what you feel makes a person an American.

## **World War I: A Turning Point**

World War I was considered a major turning point in history. Among other things, the war changed the nature of warfare, the map of Europe, and the outlook of modern society.

In a well-developed essay, describe World War I as a major turning point in modern history. Include facts and details to support your description.

## **Your Goals**

Goals can be large or small, short term or long term. We set career, educational, athletic, and personal goals. What goals have you set for your future? Why are these goals important?

In a multi-paragraph essay, discuss the goals that you have set for your future. Include details that will help the reader understand the importance of these goals.

## **Your Legacy**

A person's legacy can best be described as the memories and ideas left behind once that individual is gone. Every person leaves some form of a legacy, be it good or bad. Political figures are especially aware of their legacies, since they will be recorded in the nation's historical records. Imagine that years from now your legacy will be included in your family's history. What are some of your unique qualities and deeds that you would like included as your legacy in your family history?

In a well-developed essay, describe the legacy you would like to include in your family history. Include an explanation for choosing those unique qualities and deeds.

## **Your Unique Name**

Each of us has a name that makes us unique and helps to identify who we are. Using books, the Internet, or other resources, research the etymology of your name, its use in mythology or religion, and the naming traditions of your family or culture.

Then, write a well-developed essay in which you discuss the meaning of your name, the naming traditions of your culture, and what your name means to you.

## Pilot Prompts

### **A Challenged Belief (pilot)**

Has there been a time when you've had a long-cherished or accepted belief challenged? How did you respond? How did the challenge affect your belief?

In a multi-paragraph essay, describe a time when a long-cherished or accepted belief of yours was challenged. Discuss your response to the challenge and how the experience may have affected your belief.

### **A Meaningful Contribution (pilot)**

Opportunities to contribute one's time and talents to an important cause that benefits the greater good can be both challenging and rewarding.

Describe a time when you made a meaningful contribution to others in which the greater good was your focus. Discuss the challenges and rewards of making your contribution.

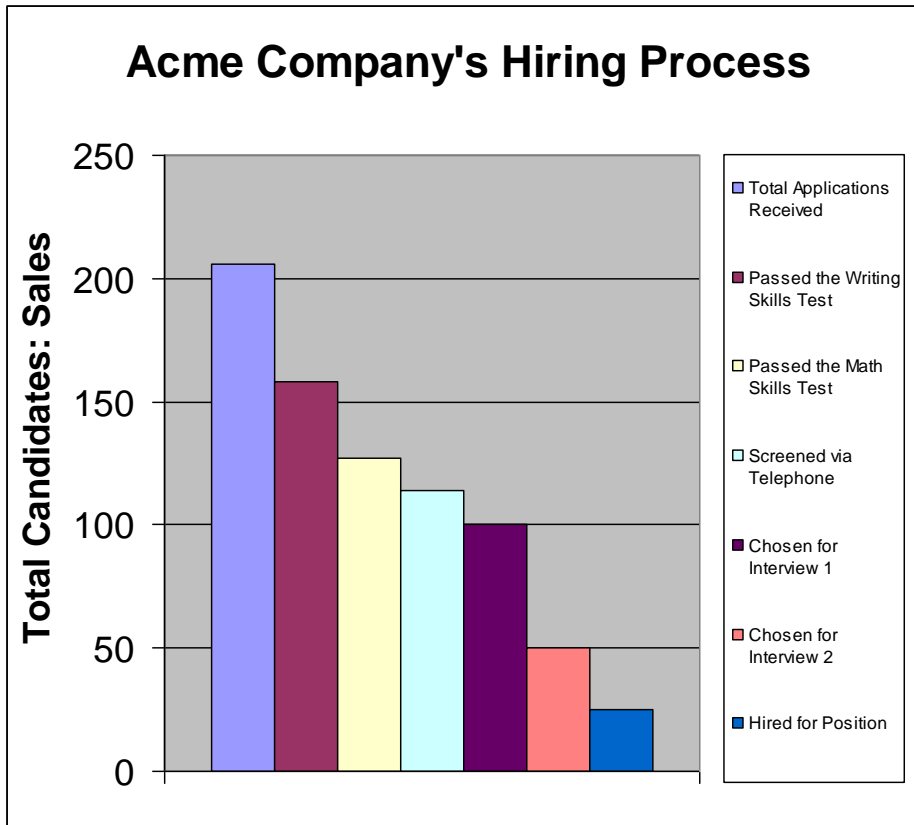
### **A Value in Which You Believe (pilot)**

We use values and beliefs to guide how we live. Think about a value in which you have a strong belief.

In a detailed essay, write about a personal value that you strongly believe in. Include details that enable the reader to understand the personal value and the strength of your belief.



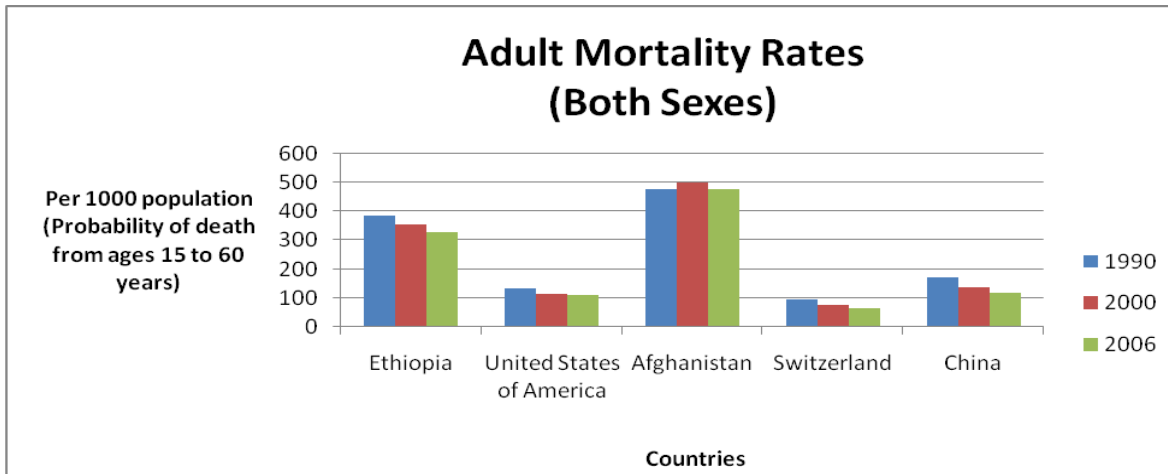
### Acme Company's Hiring Process (pilot)



The accompanying graph was compiled by Acme Company's Personnel Department to illustrate their hiring process.

In a multi-paragraph essay, describe the information presented with regard to the company's actual hiring process. You may want to compare, contrast, and categorize information pertaining to the amount of candidates who applied for the position.

### Adult Mortality Rates (pilot)



The accompanying graph shows adult mortality rates (from ages 15 to 60) from Ethiopia, the United States, Afghanistan, Switzerland, and China for the years 1990, 2000, and 2006. These data are for both sexes per population of 1,000.

In a multi-paragraph essay, summarize the information contained in the graph. You may want to select and report the main features, compare and contrast data between countries, and make connections to likely contributing factors where relevant.

### American Experience Video Review (pilot)

PBS's *American Experience* video series chronicles the lives of historical figures, events, and inventions in America. After watching a video in the series, how do you think the subject of the video had an impact on American history? How does this impact compare to that of other historical figures, inventions, or events? Do you think the series accurately portrays events in American history?

Use your readings and in-class discussions to write a well-developed essay about how the subject of the video you watched had an impact on American history. Be sure to include facts, details, and examples to support your discussion.

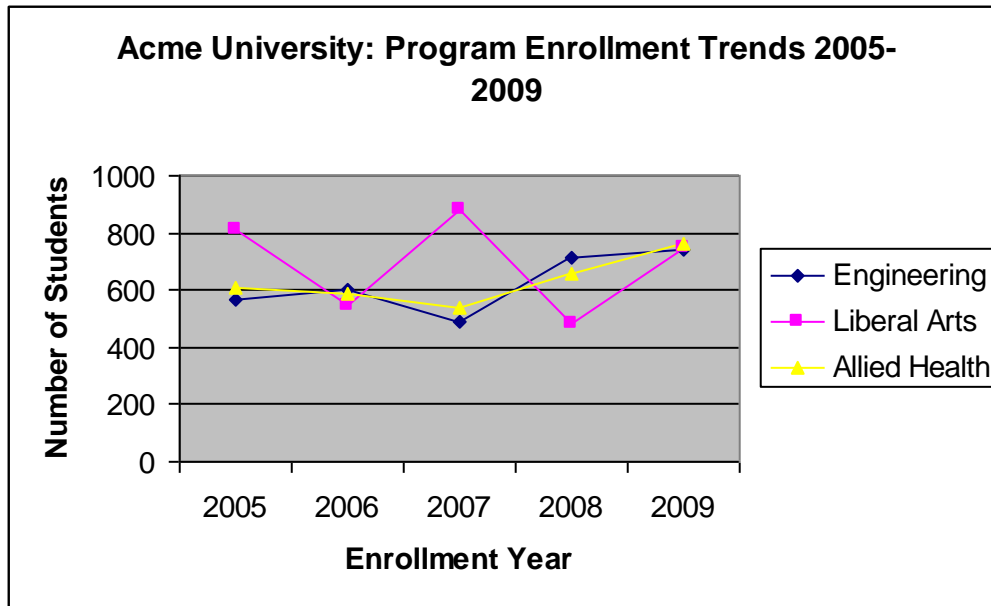
### Analysis of a Source of News (pilot)

Television, radio, newspaper, and individual conversations are just a few sources of news available to us. While most people probably rely on combinations of these sources for their news, some people rely on a particular source almost exclusively.

Write an essay discussing the relative strengths and weaknesses of one particular source for news. Provide examples to illustrate your claims. Develop your ideas so vividly that a reader will have a clear understanding of the benefits and shortcomings of a particular source of news.

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### Analysis of Program Enrollment Trends (pilot)



The accompanying graph was compiled by Acme University's Admissions Department to show trends in the numbers of students applying to major in engineering, liberal arts, and allied health programs in 2005 through 2009.

In a multi-paragraph essay, analyze the graph and describe the major trends and details that it displays. In your response, focus on comparing, contrasting, and categorizing the data in the graph.

### Application of Newton's Laws of Motion (pilot)

Newton's Laws of Motion describe and explain the effects of forces acting on a body and that body's motion resulting from the forces acting on it. Newton explained motion in three laws.

Using examples and appropriate scientific terminology, describe and discuss an application of each of Newton's Laws of Motion.

### Billy Joel's "Allentown": Stories of Our Cities (pilot)

Billy Joel's well-known song "Allentown," released in 1982, tells the tale of a Pennsylvania town enduring economic hardship, as many of its steel factories were closing down. The song attempts to depict the lives of the blue-collar workers during the decline of the manufacturing industry during the

late 1960s and early 1970s. Can you think of a city, either in the United States or another part of the world, that is currently experiencing some type of economic decline?

In a detailed essay, discuss a current city experiencing economic hardship, similar to that of Allentown in Billy Joel's song. Provide details and reasons pertaining to this city's economic situation in your discussion. You may want to conduct research on this topic through the iSEEK search engine, [www.iseek.com](http://www.iseek.com).

### **Black Like Me: Then and Now (pilot)**

In 1959, John Howard Griffin, a white journalist exploring the black man's experience in the segregated South, recruited a dermatologist to assist him in artificially darkening his skin by using drugs, sunlamp treatments, and skin creams. Griffin did this so he could travel through Louisiana, Mississippi, Georgia, and South Carolina as a black man. Even people who knew Griffin well did not recognize him with his darkened skin and shaved head. Griffin kept a diary during the weeks he traveled and subsequently wrote the book *Black Like Me*. In his diary and book, Griffin tells of both blacks and whites disapproving of the things he did. He writes about the "hate" stares received from whites, and the scowls received from black bus riders when he offered his seat to a white woman. Most of the general public responded well to his book; however, Griffin received enough negative responses to incite a temporary move to Mexico for safety reasons.

Do you think that Griffin's experiences traveling as a black man in post-civil rights America would be very different from his experiences traveling as a black man in segregated America? How would some of the situations change or stay the same?

In a detailed essay, compare and contrast Griffin's experiences in the segregated South with what he might experience today. Use facts and details about the different eras to support your assertions.

### **Business: Auto Service Follow-up Letter (pilot)**

Imagine that a regular customer just visited your automotive repair facility. You completed a 30,000-mile inspection and changed the engine and transmission fluids and filters. During the inspection, you noticed that the timing belt and serpentine belt showed cracks.

Write a multi-paragraph letter to the customer in which you summarize the repairs you completed and make recommendations for additional services. Because the customer's knowledge about cars may be different from yours, be sure to use language that the customer will understand as you explain the services clearly.

### **Business: Develop a Dress Code Policy (Part 1) (pilot)**

Imagine you are a mid-level manager at a growing company. As the company has added staff, some employees have been observed dressing in casual attire. Senior management wishes to establish a

policy regulating how employees dress. It seeks a company-wide policy that is not overly formal, but rather one which sets clear standards and limits the most casual forms of dress. You have been asked to write the first draft of this new policy for the senior management team.

In an organized, multi-paragraph essay, discuss the need for a dress-code policy in your workplace and provide several specific, detailed guidelines. Use reasons and examples to make your recommendations persuasive to the senior management team.

### **Business: Dress Code Email (Part 2) (pilot)**

Imagine you are a mid-level manager at a growing company. Senior management has officially accepted the dress-code policy you developed. You have been asked to write an email to deliver this new policy to the whole company.

Write a multi-paragraph email to be read by the whole company in which you explain the new dress-code policy. Be sure to set clear expectations for the staff and identify the repercussions for those who violate the policy. Choose your words carefully, as this email will become part of the company's official policy.

### **Business: Dress Code Violation Notice (Part 4) (pilot)**

Imagine you are a mid-level manager at a growing company. Under the direction of the senior management, you created a new dress-code policy that has been in effect for six months. While there has been some debate about the policy among the employees, the policy has been accepted by most. One employee, however, has refused to follow the new policy. You are the direct supervisor of this employee.

Write a corrective letter to this employee in which you explain the importance of the new dress code policy and describe how you expect the employee to behave. Choose your words carefully, as this letter will be read by everyone in the company.

### **Business (Hotel Scenario Part 1): Complaint Letter (pilot)**

Imagine you are a customer service manager for a major hotel chain. A guest recently visited one of your hotels in Chicago. The guest found a cockroach in the room and was extremely dissatisfied with the hotel. The guest complained to the local manager who has asked for your help.

Write a letter to the guest in which you address his or her concerns and describe the steps you plan to take to fix the problem. Remember to choose your words carefully. While you have to honestly and directly address the customer's complaint, you also have to protect the hotel's image.

### **Business (Hotel Scenario Part 2): Housekeeping Email (pilot)**

Imagine you are a customer service manager for a major hotel chain. A guest recently visited one of your hotels in Chicago. The guest found a cockroach in the room and was extremely dissatisfied with the hotel. The guest complained to the local manager who has asked for your help.

Write an email to the local manager of the hotel housekeeping staff in which you explain the problem as it was described to you by the customer. Indicate what steps you expect the local housekeeping staff to take to fix the problem and ensure it does not happen again. Remember to choose your words carefully as you describe the problem and solution to the local manager.

### **Business (Hotel Scenario Part 3): Pest Control Letter (pilot)**

Imagine you are a customer service manager for a major hotel chain. A guest recently visited one of your hotels in Chicago. The guest found a cockroach in the room and was extremely dissatisfied with the hotel. The guest complained to the local manager who explained that the hotel had just been serviced by a local pest control company.

Write a letter of complaint to the pest control company in which you explain the hotel's continuing problem with cockroaches. Clearly describe what actions you expect the pest control company to take. Remember to choose your words carefully as a continuing cockroach problem will endanger the hotel's reputation.

### **Business: Internet Usage Policy Email (pilot)**

Imagine you are a network administrator at a mid-sized company. You have just received an anonymous tip about an employee who has been using a company computer to access the Internet in an inappropriate fashion.

Write an email to the employee in which you explain your company's Internet Use Policy, discuss why it is important, and describe how you expect the employee to behave. Because the employee violated company policy, be sure to use language that is appropriate and describe your expectations clearly.

### **Business Letter to a Corporate Office (pilot)**

Consumers often send letters to corporate offices to express their pleasure or displeasure concerning a company's products or services. Think about product(s) or service(s) with which you have had positive or negative experiences. If you wrote a letter to a corporate office, what feedback would you provide concerning your experience(s)?

In a multi-paragraph letter written to a corporate office, discuss your positive and/or negative experience(s) with a company's product(s) or service(s). Be sure to include specific details to support your discussion and maintain appropriate tone for a business letter.

### **Call to Action in President Obama's Inaugural Speech (pilot)**

Barack Obama assumed the presidency at a time of great uncertainty; when economic and political crises, both domestic and foreign, had shaken the confidence of many Americans. Obama acknowledged these challenges after taking his oath of office and suggested his government was ready to face them, saying, “For everywhere we look, there is work to be done.”

Yet, in a manner reminiscent of John F. Kennedy's inaugural petition, “. . . ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country,” Obama observed that his government alone could not solve all of the nation's problems. Carefully consider this excerpt from Obama's address:

For as much as government can do and must do, it is ultimately the faith and determination of the American people upon which this nation relies. It is the kindness to take in a stranger when the levees break, the selflessness of workers who would rather cut their hours than see a friend lose their job which sees us through our darkest hours. It is the firefighter's courage to storm a stairway filled with smoke, but also a parent's willingness to nurture a child, that finally decides our fate. Our challenges may be new. The instruments with which we meet them may be new. But those values upon which our success depends — hard work and honesty, courage and fair play, tolerance and curiosity, loyalty and patriotism — these things are old. These things are true. They have been the quiet force of progress throughout our history. What is demanded then is a return to these truths. What is required of us now is a new era of responsibility — a recognition, on the part of every American, that we have duties to ourselves, our nation, and the world, duties that we do not grudgingly accept but rather seize gladly, firm in the knowledge that there is nothing so satisfying to the spirit, so defining of our character, than giving our all to a difficult task.

How will you heed this call? What duties can you perform to help America meet its challenges?

Write an essay in which you describe the specific actions that you can take right now to help your nation meet its challenges. How will these actions benefit the nation?

To read the full text of President Obama's Inauguration speech, [click here](#).

### **Can We Trust Statistics? (pilot)**

Statistics are used to substantiate and refute claims, document research findings, and address hypotheses. We encounter them in journal, magazine, and newspaper articles and hear them on television and radio. At all times we are faced with the option of either questioning or believing these statistics.

In a well-developed essay, discuss whether a statistic can be accepted without reservation or should first be investigated. Include facts and examples to support your position.

### **Celebrating Fan Traditions (pilot)**

One thing that is unique to all school sports teams is its fan base. Fans are passionate about their teams and their sports community.

Attend an upcoming game at your school and observe the fans. What unites them? Are they all wearing school colors or sitting in a certain section of the stadium? What traditions are unique to their group? Are there cheers/chants they use every game? What new twists has this year's group of fans added?

Write a descriptive, well-developed feature story that celebrates your fans' best traditions. To review an example of a feature story like this, you can go to the [DS Reporter Feature Story example](#).

### **Celebrity Politicians (pilot)**

America bestows a generous amount of respect and fortune on its celebrities. Yet, we are sometimes surprised when celebrities step out of their roles as entertainers or sports stars and into the role of politician, as Ronald Reagan, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Lynn Swann, and many others have. What do you think about celebrities who seek to hold political power?

Write an essay in which you articulate your position on this issue. Be sure to discuss the pros and cons of having a celebrity as a politician and support your position with relevant facts and details.

### **Changing the Variables of a Pendulum's Motion (pilot)**

Variables including the length of the pendulum's arm, gravity, mass of the pendulum, and charge of the pendulum affect the pendulum's motion.

In a detailed essay, describe the changes in variables that would cause an increase in the velocity of a pendulum's motion.

### **Civil Rights – Kennedy Administration (pilot)**

The Kennedy Administration was subject to influence from several factions in its response to the Civil Rights Movement. In a detailed essay, analyze the ways in which the Kennedy Administration adjusted its response to the challenges presented by the Civil Rights Movement between 1961 and 1963.

### **Civil Rights – Moderates and Militants (pilot)**

Moderate (SCLC and SNCC) and militant (Nation of Islam, Black Power, and Black Panthers) groups had different views about the value of racial integration, the goals for their race, and the methods for achieving those goals. In a detailed essay, compare and contrast the moderate and militant approaches to the issue of civil rights between the 1950s and 1970s.



### **Civil Rights – Youth (pilot)**

Teenagers and young adults played a prominent role in the efforts of the Civil Rights Movement. They participated in the integration of Central High School, the integration of lunch counters across the South, and the Freedom Rides. In a detailed essay, analyze the leadership role teenagers and young adults played on the front lines of the Civil Rights Movement during the late 1950s and early 1960s.

### **Compare and Contrast Families of Organic Compounds (pilot)**

Organic compounds are also known as hydrocarbons because their main chemical composition is carbon and hydrogen. Other atoms like oxygen, nitrogen, phosphorus, and sulfur are also important for some groups of organic compounds. Despite the similarities in chemical composition, groups of organic compounds—proteins, carbohydrates, lipids, and nucleic acids—have distinctly different structures and functions. Many proteins are enzymes, which facilitate chemical reactions in our bodies. Carbohydrates and lipids provide energy for our bodies, and nucleic acids are instrumental in genetics.

In a detailed essay, compare and contrast groups of organic compounds. Include chemical structure and role in living organisms in your discussion.

### **Compare and Contrast Newspaper Headline Articles (pilot)**

Newspaper headlines are written to reflect the concerns of readers. Headline articles may report on political, government, sports, local, national, or international news. Using the newseum link, select two different newspaper headline articles from two different locations in the United States. How do the nature of the articles, the perspective of the writers, and the reason(s) for their importance to the location compare and contrast?

In a multi-paragraph essay, compare and contrast at least two headline articles from locations in the United States. Include facts and details to support your discussion.

### **Comparison of "Imagine" and "We Are the World" (pilot)**

The classic songs "Imagine" by John Lennon and "We Are the World" by USA for Africa share the theme of hope for a peaceful world. Although the messages of both songs are similar, there are also differences between the two.

In a well-developed essay, analyze the meanings and messages expressed in both "Imagine" and "We Are the World," and then compare and contrast the two songs. Provide examples from both songs to support your comparison.

**Conservation of Linear Momentum (pilot)**

Linear momentum cannot change in a closed system of particles.

Explain and illustrate the statement above using an example of a system of particles. Use scientific terminology appropriately to describe the particles, center of mass, momentum, internal and external forces, and conservation of momentum.

**Converting to a New Religion (pilot)**

Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism are frequently considered the five major religions of the world. Imagine you were required to change your current religion to one of these major religions. Which religion would you choose? What aspects of this religion appeal to you?

In a multi-paragraph essay, discuss your choice of a new religion and your reasons for choosing it. Include facts and details to support your discussion.

**Create and Describe Electrical Circuits (pilot)**

Electrical circuits need an energy source, a closed path, and a device that uses the energy. The source of the energy can be direct current (DC) like a battery, or alternating current (AC) like electrical outlets in our houses. The closed path through which the energy flows can have devices using the energy arranged in series, parallel, or a combination of the two.

In a multi-paragraph essay, describe an electrical circuit. Include a description of the energy source, flow of energy through the circuit, the devices that use the energy, and the arrangement of the devices in the circuit (parallel, series, or a combination).

**Description of a Kinematic System (pilot)**

Kinematic systems can be described in terms of velocity, projectile motion, distance, displacement, acceleration, time, and/or direction.

In a multi-paragraph essay, using the appropriate scientific terminology, describe all facets of a kinematic system in detail.

**Description of a "Natural Leader" (pilot)**

A person who seems in charge of every situation is sometimes called a "natural leader." People often look to such a person to lead them in projects both great and small. Describe someone you have read about who seems to be a "natural leader." Write an essay in which you describe the person and his or her accomplishments so vividly that your readers will feel they know this person.

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### **Description of a Venn Diagram (pilot)**

Describe what a Venn diagram is.

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### **Differences Between Pyramids (pilot)**

Explain in words how a triangular pyramid differs from a rectangular pyramid.

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### **Different Types of Music for Different Events (pilot)**

Explain why different types of music are needed for different types of ceremonies and events.

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### **Does Your Environment Define You or Do You Define Your Environment? (pilot)**

“We make the world we live in and shape our own environment.” -- Orison Swett Marden

“Be careful the environment you choose for it will shape you . . .” -- W. Clement Stone

The quotations by Marden and Stone reflect two very different views about individuals and their environment. Does your environment shape your character, choices, and purpose? Is everything you do a response to your environment or do you shape your environment by your presence, decisions, and existence?

What do you believe? What does your belief reveal about your view of the world around you? In a detailed essay, explain whether you believe that you define your environment or your environment defines you. Include details and in-depth examples from personal experience, readings, and research to support your explanation.

### **Duality of Humankind (pilot)**

Throughout history, many intellects have perceived the notion of mankind as having an outer self (the side we show for others) and an inner self (a place where our true self lies). In *The Souls of Black Folk*, W. E. B. Dubois saw the African American as living life through a veil. On the outside of the veil lies the surface world and how he is perceived or presents himself, and on the inside of the veil is his true self, where he keeps his most guarded thoughts and aspirations.

In a detailed essay, explain whether you believe it is wise to live a duality of inner and outer self, or better to live as the true person that you are, both inside and out.

### **Early American Inventions (pilot)**

Imagine that you are living in Philadelphia during the Industrial Revolution (1870s to 1890s). Select an invention that was developed during that time period and write an informational article about the invention for the local newspaper. Your article should describe the invention, define its purpose, describe its positive aspects, and explain how it will improve the lives of the people living in the United States during the Industrial Revolution.

### **Earth Systems (pilot)**

Earth is a collection of dynamic systems that have undergone significant changes throughout time to become what they are today. Plate tectonics explains many natural phenomena like earthquakes and volcanoes, the atmosphere plays a large role in determining weather and climate, and Earth's water and soil impact the productivity and habitability of the land, among other things.

In a multi-paragraph essay, describe the interrelationships of Earth's systems. Use scientific facts and examples to support your discussion.

### **Economic Impact of Environmental Decisions (pilot)**

As we become more aware of our impact on the environment, citizens and legislators are faced with decisions which impact local, state, and national economies. For example, government restrictions on construction due to effects on endangered species or wetland areas can affect the employment levels of a community. If you were a citizen or government official facing a decision between environmental protection and local economics, what factors would affect your decision-making process?

In a well-developed essay, discuss the factors which might affect the decision-making process when either the environment or local economics are at stake. Include facts and examples to support your discussion.

**Economic Impact of Pollution (pilot)**

There are costs and benefits associated with pollution. Although the general public does not desire to live in a polluted world, the economic impact of a pollution-free environment may not be desirable either.

In a multi-paragraph essay, discuss the economic impact of controlling a form of pollution. Consider including cost-benefit analysis, marginal costs, and sustainability in your discussion. Include facts and examples to support your discussion.

**Effect of the Black Death in Middle Ages Europe (pilot)**

The Black Death had profound effects on most of Europe during the Middle Ages. Whom did the Black Death affect, and in what ways did people's lives change?

After researching and reading primary documents and other information, write a multi-paragraph essay describing the effects of the Black Death on people's lives in Europe during the Middle Ages. Include facts and details to support your description.

**Effect of the Loss of a Species (pilot)**

You have probably heard or read in the news about the concern over extinction of species by habitat loss, pollution, and other anthropological and natural factors. Describe how the loss of a species can have an undesirable effect on the surviving organisms in a food web.

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**Electron Transport in Biochemical Pathways (pilot)**

Energy movement in biochemical pathways is determined by electron transfer. In both metabolic and catabolic reactions like respiration, photosynthesis, glycolysis, and fermentation, energy is captured or made available to the organism via the transfer of electrons.

In a detailed essay, discuss the flow of energy through the transfer of electrons in biochemical pathways. Use facts and examples to support your discussion.

**Energy Flow (pilot)**

Plants on Earth utilize solar energy to photosynthesize, beginning the flow of energy from the sun to all living things on Earth. This energy flows through food webs and trophic levels, sustaining life at all levels.

In a multi-paragraph essay, describe the flow of energy from the sun through living things on Earth. Include scientific facts and examples to support your description.

### **Evaluation of the "Era of Good Feelings" (pilot)**

The period following the War of 1812 (1815 – 1825), was a time of emerging nationalism and sectionalism and has been identified as the "Era of Good Feelings."

In a detailed essay, evaluate the accuracy of the label "Era of Good Feelings." Include facts and details to support your evaluation.

### **Evidence for Evolution (pilot)**

There is modern-day evidence that supports the theory of evolution. Changes in plant and animal organs and populations have been observed and documented, and improvements in technology have enabled more accurate dating of fossils, showing change in vertebrates over time. However, despite these data, there is still skepticism about evolution.

In a multi-paragraph essay, discuss evidence that supports and refutes the theory of evolution. Use scientific facts and examples to support your discussion.

### **Exchanging Your Right to Vote for a Comfortable Life (pilot)**

As a citizen of the United States, you will soon be old enough to vote. When you are of voting age, would you be willing to permanently give up your right to vote if someone guaranteed you a comfortable life (a good job, lots of free time, and other services)?

In a multi-paragraph essay, discuss the advantages and disadvantages of giving up your right to vote in exchange for a comfortable life. Include facts and details to support your discussion.

### **Exercising in Your Neighborhood (pilot)**

When you decide to make your life health-enhancing, you modify your lifestyle to incorporate more fitness opportunities. How can you get more exercise within your neighborhood?

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### **Explanation of a Solution to a Math Problem (pilot)**

Common Core math practice standards are educational guidelines that help students become proficient problem solvers. By following the guidelines, you can present a clear, concise, and accurate explanation for your solution to a math problem. After solving a math problem, write a multi-paragraph essay by following the Common Core math practice standards process:

1. Introduce the problem and describe the scenario.
2. Analyze the information given.
3. Solve the problem.
4. Justify the answer.

Use details from the math problem that you solved to fully support your discussion of the four steps listed.

### **Faraday's and Lenz's Laws (pilot)**

An electric current can be produced by a change in magnetic flux surrounding a conductor. Faraday's Law and Lenz's Law explain the magnitude and direction of the induced current. How can these concepts be demonstrated?

In a detailed essay, describe a demonstration of electromagnetic induction using Faraday's and Lenz's Laws to explain the phenomena observed. Use appropriate scientific terminology in your description.

### **Father and Son in Chapin's "Cat's in the Cradle" (pilot)**

The folk rock song "Cat's in the Cradle" by Harry Chapin tells the story of a relationship between a father and son. Based on a poem written by Chapin's wife, Sandy, about her first husband and his father, the song became a hit for Harry Chapin when it was released in 1974. Paying close attention to the lyrics of the song, one sees that the lyrics tell a story in chronological order. How do the feelings and actions change between the father and son as the song continues?

In a well-developed essay, analyze the lyrics of the song and explain the relationship between the father and son, paying particular attention to the changes that take place in their relationship over time. Be sure to cite lyrics from the song in support of your analysis.

### **Favorite Genre (pilot)**

There are many types of books and literature available to readers, including creative adventures, science fiction, autobiographies, and poetry. In a detailed essay, describe your favorite literary genre and why you enjoy it.

### **Formula for Intelligence (pilot)**

"Knowing a great deal is not the same as being smart; intelligence is not information alone but also judgment, the manner in which information is collected and used." – Carl Sagan

There are many aspects that play into a person's intelligence that go beyond academic learning. Factors such as life experience, emotional control, and decision making will also play a major role in the completion of one's intellect. Imagine that you were asked to create the formula for an intelligent person. What are some of the key components a person would need to achieve intelligence?

In a detailed essay, describe your formula for intelligence.

### **Future of an Endangered Species (pilot)**

Many animal species are in danger of becoming extinct because of challenges that threaten their survival. Select an animal from the Endangered Species List. Then, research the animal's characteristics, living habits, habitat, and adaptations to its habitat.

In a detailed essay, discuss the endangered animal you researched and possible solutions for its future success. Include information from your research that enables the reader to better understand the animal and the challenges that threaten its survival.

### **Game-Changing Performances (pilot)**

The goal of a sports game story is not to just report the final score, but also to tell the reader about the turning points in the game that led to the end result.

Attend an upcoming game at your school and take note of what play or player had fans still talking after the game ended. Write about the game's most spectacular play or its most spectacular individual performance and how it affected the game's final outcome. Describe the play/performance in as much detail as possible, using action verbs and descriptive adjectives. To review an example of a game story like this, you can go to the [DS Reporter Game Story example](#).

### **Gender Inequality Seen in No Doubt's "Just a Girl" (pilot)**

In No Doubt's 1995 hit song, "Just a Girl," lead singer Gwen Stefani sings about gender inequality. What is the message that Stefani is trying to express in the song? As a female or male, can you relate any of the ideas in the song to your own experiences?

In a well-developed essay, analyze the meaning of this song as it pertains to gender inequality by paying close attention to the lyrics. Also provide personal examples from your life that may relate to the ideas in the song, as well as examples from the song itself to support your response.



### Genetic Disorders (pilot)

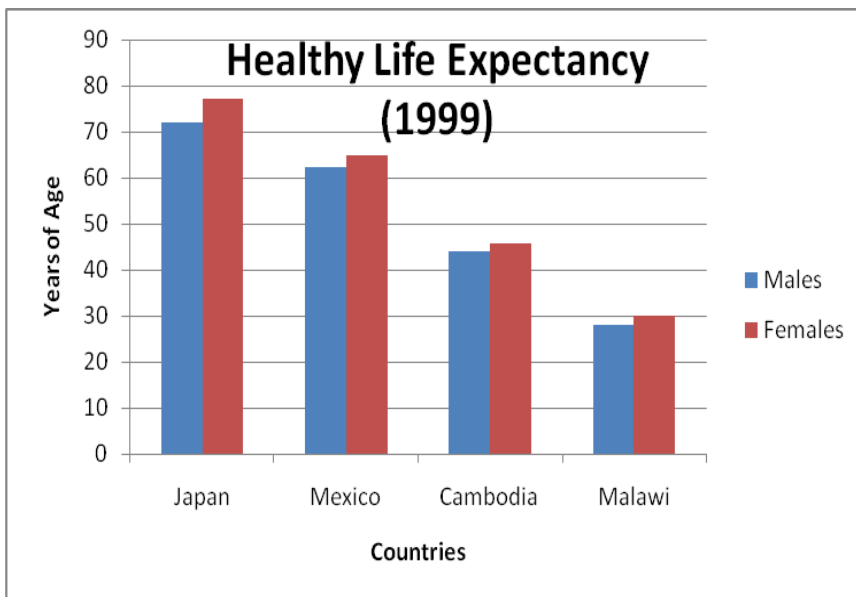
The use of pedigrees to trace genetic disorders in families has improved the understanding of the inheritance patterns associated with these disorders.

In a multi-paragraph essay, discuss our understanding of genetic disorders and the use of pedigrees to predict future phenotypes. Use scientific terminology and details to support your discussion.

### Geometry in Structures (pilot)

Geometry plays an important role in the design and construction of buildings, bridges, and other structures. In a well-developed essay, discuss a structure and the way that geometry is used in its design and construction.

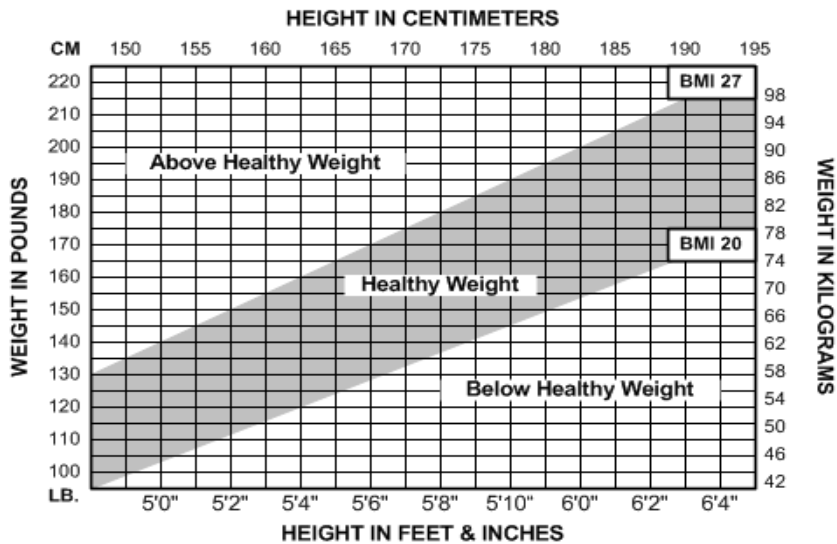
### Healthy Life Expectancy (pilot)



The accompanying graph shows the life-expectancy projections from data collected in 1999 for men and women in Japan, Mexico, Cambodia, and Malawi.

In a multi-paragraph essay, analyze the information presented in the graph. Your analysis may include a summary, comparison, or contrast of data in the graph.

## Height, Weight, and Body Mass Index (pilot)



The accompanying graph illustrates the relationships between height, weight, body mass index (BMI), and healthiness of weight. Measurements are given in metric and standard units. In a multi-paragraph essay, summarize and describe the information in the graph, making comparisons when possible.

## Homeostatic Mechanisms (pilot)

Plants and animals use homeostatic mechanisms to control their internal environment and maintain stability. Homeostasis frequently involves the use of hormones and feedback on the production of these hormones to maintain a balance. However, some regulatory processes rely on other homeostatic mechanisms.

In a multi-paragraph essay, discuss a homeostatic mechanism in a plant or animal. Include scientific facts and examples to support your discussion.

## How Change or Diversity has Affected Your Life (pilot)

Global studies increase our awareness of the change and diversity present all around us. In a multi-paragraph essay, discuss instances where change or diversity has affected your life. Include details and examples to support your discussion.

## How Do You Know This is a Rotation Problem? (pilot)

You are taking a physics exam, and you are stuck on a certain problem. You suddenly realize that torque is central to the problem, and then you are ready to solve it.

Using appropriate physics terminology, explain why torque was a sure clue to the nature of the problem, and propose a strategy or strategies for solving it.

### **Hurdles for a Political Outsider (pilot)**

In the 2008 Presidential election, marked by many historic firsts, Alaska Governor Sarah Palin has found herself abruptly thrust into the national spotlight. While the months leading to the national election promise to be grueling for all of the candidates, this will be especially true for the candidate from Alaska, who emerged from the geographic isolation of Alaskan politics to compete on the national stage as a Washington "outsider."

In a well-organized essay, discuss the biggest hurdles you think a candidate who is a Washington "outsider" would have to overcome during a national election. What advice would you provide to this candidate to help him or her run an effective and successful campaign? Be sure to support your discussion with examples and reasons drawn from your studies and observations.

### **Impact of DNA Discoveries (pilot)**

The discoveries of the existence, structure, and function of DNA have had significant impacts on scientific thought since the mid-1900s. Transmission and expression of genetic traits and insight into the origins of humankind are now better understood.

In a multi-paragraph essay, discuss the scientific ramifications of the discoveries of the existence, structure, and function of DNA. Use appropriate scientific terminology and details to support your discussion.

### **Impact of the Declaration of Independence on History (pilot)**

The Declaration of Independence is considered one of the most important documents in the history of the United States. Its key ideas and principles have had a profound effect on the course of history.

In a well-developed essay, discuss how the key ideas and principles of the Declaration of Independence have changed history. Include facts and details to support your discussion.

### **Importance of Career Fairs (pilot)**

Many schools sponsor a Career Fair where students can discuss career opportunities with persons who work in different professions. Think about the benefits of attending a Career Fair. Now write to explain the benefits of attending a Career Fair.

### **Important Modes of Transportation (pilot)**

Many modes of transportation are used in the world today. Goods and people around the world move from place to place by automobile, bicycle, airplane, horse, boat, train, and many others. Which mode of transportation do you think is particularly important? How is this type of transportation helpful or valuable?

Write an essay about one form of transportation used in our world today. Describe what it is used for and why you think it is especially significant.

### **Industrialization and Imperialism (pilot)**

After successfully assisting the government of Country X in creating a new Constitution, the Prime Minister has hired you to be her Chief of Staff. Your primary role is to serve as her personal advisor. Country X has been industrializing its economy, which has created many new challenges for the government and people of Country X.

The Prime Minister has asked you to use your knowledge of history to inform her of the issues Country X now faces as a result of industrialization. As her Chief of Staff, you must present a well-written multi-paragraph essay that includes an introduction, supporting paragraphs, and a conclusion. In particular, you must explain to the Prime Minister the positive and negative effects of each of the following main issues:

- Country X's lack of natural resources (i.e., imperialism)
- Social implications of industrialization (e.g., plight of workers, etc.)
- Expectations for political and economic changes

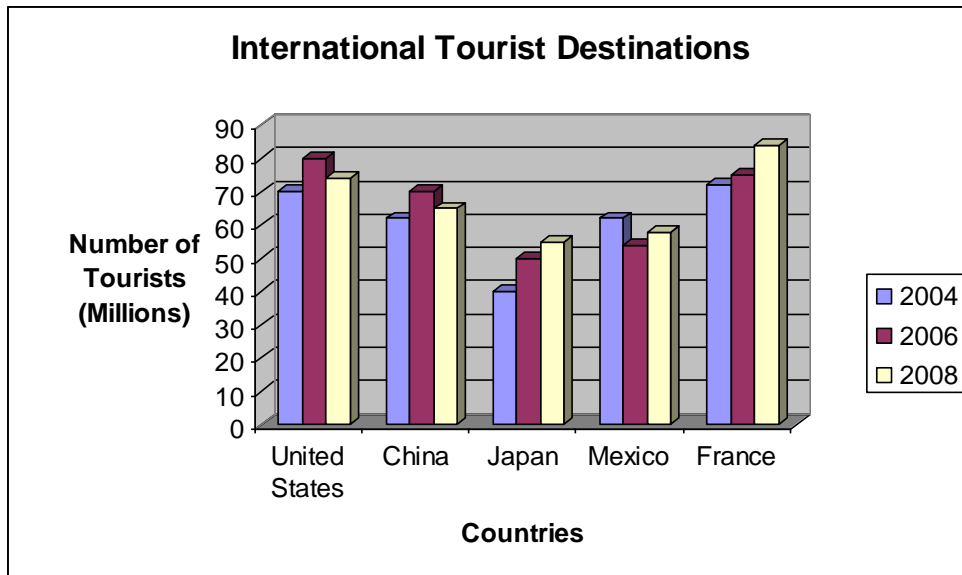
You must reference at least one picture or reading from primary sources. You may use your notes from previous meetings with other advisors. Be sure to use your prior knowledge to strengthen the reasons for your ideas.

### **Influence of Change on Revolutions (pilot)**

Revolutions can be influenced by other revolutions or changes in thought or technology. For example, the Enlightenment affected the French Revolution, and the Neolithic Revolution affected changes in civilization.

In a well-developed essay, explain how revolutions have been influenced by other revolutions, changes in thought, or changes in technology. Include facts and details to support your explanation.

### International Tourist Destinations (pilot)



The accompanying graph shows trends in the number of tourists visiting the United States, China, Japan, Mexico, and France in the years 2004, 2006, and 2008.

In a multi-paragraph essay, summarize and describe the information in the graph, making comparisons when possible.

### Interview a Player (pilot)

A good sports journalist knows the right questions to ask to draw something unique out of a subject. The key is to avoid questions that can be answered with one or two words. Instead, craft questions that encourage your subject to tell his or her personal story.

As part of your prewriting, make a list of five questions that you think will prompt an athlete at your school to tell his or her story. Consider questions like, “What has been the highlight of your career so far?” or “Tell me about your training habits and what you think has been the key to your success?”

Then, attend a sports practice or game at your school and, at its conclusion, interview one player. Write the interview in a question-and-answer format.

Transcribe that interview into a question-and-answer story.

### **Jacksonian Democracy (pilot)**

The age of Jackson (1828–1850) saw a democratizing impact on American society due to the changes in economic policies, electoral politics, and Manifest Destiny. In a multi-paragraph essay, analyze this democratizing effect using facts and details to support your analysis.

### **John Henry and the Struggle of the American Worker (pilot)**

The story of John Henry is a famous African American folktale that sheds light on the conditions of the American worker in the shadow of the Industrial Revolution and a changing America. During this period of great technology and growth for America, the poor, common worker faced both old and new challenges. The character of John Henry would later be used as a symbol by many poor and disenfranchised workers asking for better treatment and equal rights. Several versions of his tale are told, and this story has become one of the most popular ballads in American history.

After reading the tale of John Henry, in a detailed essay, describe why the folktale of John Henry became such an important symbol for the American worker and the struggle for equality. Use details and examples to support your response.

### **Knowledge of Historic Events (pilot)**

Historic events take place around the world almost every day. We become aware of these events by reading a newspaper, watching television news, or surfing the Internet. We are able to study these events, past and present, through artifacts, history books, or other recorded sources.

In a multi-paragraph essay, discuss the sources we turn to for our knowledge of historic events. Include details and examples to support your discussion.

### **"Living for the City": A Look at Poverty and Racism (pilot)**

"Living for the City" is a 1973 hit song by Stevie Wonder that explores the themes of poverty and racism by telling the story of an African American boy and his family. The song brings forth the various social conditions that impacted African Americans in the United States during the 1950s and 1960s.

In a detailed essay, analyze the meaning of this song stanza by stanza in connection with the social and economic conditions surrounding African Americans during this time in history.. Also analyze the meaning of any figurative language used in the song, and cite lyrics from the song to support your analysis. You may want to conduct research on this topic through the iSEEK search engine, [www.iseek.com](http://www.iseek.com).

### **Magnetic and Electric Fields Affect Each Other (pilot)**

Introduction of a magnetic field into an electric field will have a predictable effect on the electric field. The same is true of the introduction of an electric field into a magnetic field.

In a detailed essay, describe the effects that a magnetic field can have on an electric field and an electric field can have on a magnetic field. Be sure to use appropriate scientific terminology and include all pertinent details in your description.

### **Managing Your Personal Finances (pilot)**

A wide variety of subjects and topics are taught in today's schools. However, courses in personal finance may not be offered, and they are certainly not required for graduation. As a result, many of today's young adults graduate high school (and even college) knowing very little about how to manage their money, including how to balance a check book, differentiate between credit and debit, and invest for the future. After participating in a class or viewing a video on personal finance, how has your understanding of handling your personal finances improved? What plans will you make or actions will you take as a result?

In a well-developed essay, discuss the class or video topic on personal finance. Include what you learned and how it will impact your personal finances.

### **Martin Luther King Jr. (pilot)**

Throughout history, citizens have struggled with such issues as slavery, religious persecution, and resistance to war when their consciences demanded that they act in one way while the law demanded they act in another. Breaking the law in order to do what one considers right is an act of civil disobedience. Martin Luther King Jr. raised precisely this issue in his "Letter From Birmingham City Jail." He had been arrested for violating the law in protest of racial segregation in the American South.

Relying on your reading of the passage or outside research, write an essay in which you describe an instance in which Martin Luther King Jr. practiced civil disobedience. Be sure to address both sides of the issue. In the instance you discuss, do you think civil disobedience was an appropriate response?

### **Mathematics in Music (pilot)**

“Music is the pleasure the human mind experiences from counting without being aware that it is counting.” –Gottfried Leibniz

In a well-developed essay, explain how both the composition and performance of music utilize mathematical concepts. Be sure to provide specific details and examples.

### **Mathematics—Simplifying the Complex (pilot)**

“The essence of mathematics is not to make simple things complicated, but to make complicated things simple.”—S. Gudder

In a well-developed essay, explain how mathematics has been used to make complicated things simple. Be sure to provide specific details and examples as a part of your explanation.

### **Math Video Improves Understanding (pilot)**

We are not usually asked to describe or discuss math concepts except in a math class, and we are very rarely asked to write about them. However, writing about math concepts can improve learning, reinforce our understanding of the concepts, and strengthen our understanding of the vocabulary and terminology. After viewing a math video, think about the new concepts introduced, how they relate to what you have already learned, and how you will use them in the future. How was the video able to illustrate the concepts to improve your understanding?

In a well-developed essay, discuss the math concepts of the video and how the video impacted your understanding of those concepts. Include facts and details to support your discussion.

### **Memorial Fence (picture pilot)**



In a well-developed essay, describe what this photo means to you.

### **News Through New Media (pilot)**

"Extra! Extra! Read all about it!" In classic films, the local newsboy sells newspapers at the corner with those words. In the past century, the delivery of news has changed dramatically. News we receive in newspapers is "old" news because of the immediate dissemination of news through the Internet and television. What media do you rely on to get the breaking news? How does the reporting of local news differ from national news?



In a well-developed essay, discuss the impact of the change in news dissemination on today's society. Use facts and details to support your discussion.

### **Nourishment of the Cell (pilot)**

Think about how you feed yourself. You take in solid and liquid nourishment for energy and growth. You are fairly selective in what you eat and drink. In reality, you are feeding the billions of cells that make up your body. Write a narrative about how living cells are nourished. What parts of the cell are responsible for selecting only certain molecules and rejecting others? What specialized chemicals are produced by the cell to break down food molecules into substances suitable for cellular nourishment?

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### **Obama's Inaugural Address as Inspiration (pilot)**

In President Barack Obama's inaugural address, his intent was to capture this moment in history to invoke Americans to accept responsibility and work toward again making the United States a beacon to the world. Of the inspirational and instructional words in Obama's speech, which have made a lasting impression on you? How will these words change your life?

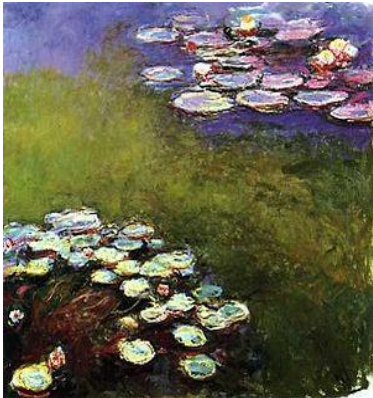
In a multi-paragraph essay, discuss Obama's inaugural address and its impact on your future. To read the full text of President Obama's Inauguration speech, click [here](#).

### **Obsessions (pilot)**

An obsession is defined as a compulsive, often unreasonable preoccupation with a fixed idea or an unwanted feeling or emotion, often accompanied by symptoms of anxiety. Many people experience or know someone with an obsession. Do you know or have you read about someone with an obsession? How does this person's obsession impact those around him/her? How do you think someone with an obsession can be helped?

In a multi-paragraph essay, discuss an obsession you may have experienced, witnessed, or read about and its impact on the obsessive person and others in his/her life. Be sure to include specific examples of this person's behavior and what help, if any, this person has received to deal with the obsessive behavior.

### Personal Response to Monet's "Water Lilies" (pilot picture)



Claude Monet, *Nymphéas*, 1916



*Water Lilies*, 1906



*Water Lilies*, 1897–1899

Claude Monet, the famous painter who is known as the father of the Impressionist movement, created a series of paintings known as "Water Lilies." During the last thirty years of his life, Monet became particularly fascinated with the images of the water lilies in his gardens at Giverny, his home in northern France. When you look at these paintings, how do they make you feel? Are there any particular emotions or images the paintings help to convey? How do the paintings help convey these emotions and images?

In a well-developed essay, write a personal response to Monet's "Water Lilies" paintings. Provide specific details from the paintings in order to clearly illustrate your reflection and interpretation.

### Person You Have Studied (pilot)

Throughout your years in school, you have studied about many different people. Think about one of these people you have studied during your time at school. What makes this person special enough to study?

Write an essay in which you discuss a person you have studied in school. Explain what it is about this person that is special. Use details and examples to support your ideas.

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### Perspective on War in "Dulce et Decorum Est" (pilot)

Individuals' attitudes toward war often change depending on their unique circumstances, perspectives, or levels of participation in a conflict. Oftentimes a person's direct experience of war will change his or her attitude toward the conflict. Wilfred Owen's poem "Dulce et Decorum Est," one of the great World War I (WWI) poems, paints a vivid picture of the horrors of war from a soldier's perspective.

After reading and researching the poem "Dulce et Decorum Est," write a multi-paragraph informational/explanatory essay about how the author's experiences in WWI influenced his perspective on war. Be sure to identify the author's perspective on war and explain how the events of WWI influenced this perspective. Remember to use multiple sources to inform your response.

### **Perspectives on Race (on pilot)**

Race can be defined as a group of individuals who share a common culture or history. As members of society, we interact with people from different races all the time. We form opinions from our personal experiences and from the stories we hear from our family members as well. What perspectives have family members shared with you about race? Do their perspectives align with what you think about people from other backgrounds? If so, how? If not, how do the perspectives differ?

In a multi-paragraph essay, explain your family members' perspectives on race. Then, compare and contrast your family members' perspectives about race with your own. Be sure to include specific details that support your ideas so the readers can fully understand your family members' perspectives on race.

### **Phylogenetic Classification (pilot)**

Phylogenetic trees graphically represent evolutionary relationships between animal groups based on their physical and genetic characteristics. An understanding of these relationships provides data on evolution, information on extinct species, and the basis for classification.

In a multi-paragraph essay, discuss the use of a phylogenetic tree to further our understanding of the relationships between animal groups. Include scientific facts and examples to support your discussion.

### **Plato's View of Knowledge (pilot)**

"And what, Socrates, is the food of the soul? Surely, I said, knowledge is the food of the soul." - Plato

In a detailed essay, describe what you believe Plato meant about the importance of knowledge, when he made the statement above to his friend Socrates.

### **Positive Outcome from Failure (pilot)**

". . .people succeed because they understand that you can't let your failures define you-you have to let them teach you. You have to let them show you what to do differently next time."

- President Barack Obama, Broadcasted Speech, September 8, 2009

Reflecting on this quote from President Obama's speech, think of a time when the lessons learned from a failure led to a more positive outcome. Be sure to include specific, relevant details and examples so

readers can picture the situation in their minds.

### **Poverty and Equality - Past and Present (pilot)**

As a historian, you have been tasked with researching poverty and equality in America to see if the problems of the Gilded Age (i.e., the late 1800s through the early 1900s) persist today. Once you have formed your opinion, write an article for the Journal of American History that compares and contrasts the poverty and inequality of the past with the realities of the present. Support your opinion with evidence from documents used in your research.

### **Power: Attaining, Maintaining, and Losing It (pilot)**

There are many examples in history of individuals or groups attaining, maintaining, and losing power. How did these groups or individuals rise to power? What led to the downfall of some and the success of others?

In a multi-paragraph essay, discuss how power is attained, maintained, and lost. Include specific examples from history to support your discussion.

### **Practical and Future Uses for Capacitors (pilot)**

Capacitors use conductors and insulators in the form of dielectrics to store energy. Capacitors are found in most electronics, such as to supply backup energy when changing batteries. Although currently the amount of energy that can be stored is relatively small, plans for future uses of capacitors include quick cell phone recharging.

In a detailed essay, describe a capacitor and its construction, explain how it works, and discuss possible uses for it. Include appropriate scientific terminology and facts in the description and explanation.

### **Predator-Prey Relationships (pilot)**

Predator-prey relationships can be subject to coevolution and can result in disastrous effects to an ecosystem if disturbed. The adaptation of the prey species to defend against predators ranges from morphological defenses to protective coloration. The loss of a prey or predator species can disrupt an entire ecosystem and have economic ramifications.

In a multi-paragraph essay, discuss predator-prey relationships, including defensive adaptations by prey and the effects of disruption of that relationship on an ecosystem. Include scientific facts and examples to support your discussion.

### **Press Release on Gregor Mendel's Findings (pilot)**

Modern genetic understanding can be traced to the early work of Gregor Mendel. Write a press release outlining Mendel's findings and contributions concerning pea-plant genetics.

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### **Principles of Electrostatics (pilot)**

The differences between electric forces and fields and potential energy and potential depend on the charged particles in a system. Electric forces can exist only when there are two or more charged particles in proximity. Likewise, potential energy can exist only if there are two or more charged bodies in proximity.

In a detailed essay, explain the differences between electric forces, electric fields, potential energy, and potential. Use appropriate scientific terminology and examples to illustrate the concepts.

### **Profile a Coach (pilot)**

Many believe that coaches are the most influential-and their coaching techniques the most critical-at the high school level, when athletes are still learning the game.

Attend an upcoming game at your high school. Observe and interview the coach. Then, write a well-developed feature story about the coach. Include details of how he/she got started coaching, what his/her coaching philosophies are and what he/she thinks is the most important thing to teach a high school athlete. To review an example of a feature story like this, you can go to the [DS Reporter Feature Story example](#).

### **Progressive Reform (pilot)**

The plight of the worker, especially in the steel, railroad, and mining industries, received enough attention in the Progressive Era to result in the passage of safety regulations. How did reformers use the power of state and federal governments to protect the interests of workers and consumers during the Progressive Era?

In a well-developed, multi-paragraph essay, identify issues regarding worker and consumer safety that progressive reformers addressed. Explain how different levels of government investigated problems and then passed legislation in order to protect workers and consumers. Include facts and details to support your discussion.

**Prom Dress Code (pilot)**

The senior prom is a very special event. One of the reasons why it is so special is because everyone attending gets to dress in formal attire. School administrators present prom goers with a dress code and sometimes inspect student attire for appropriateness as they arrive. What is considered to be appropriate attire for a prom? What rules would you suggest for the senior prom dress code at your school?

In a well-developed essay, describe the dress code you would suggest for the senior prom. Include facts and details to support your description.

**Propaganda Posters of WWI and WWII (pilot)**

The government used many different methods to encourage public support for the war effort during World War I and World War II. One of the more effective tools used to affect public opinion and encourage support during both wars was the propaganda poster. How did the federal government use posters to shape the opinions and behavior of the American public during WWI and WWII?

In a multi-paragraph essay, analyze the similarities and differences in the government's messages to the American public during WWI and WWII, as exemplified by the use of propaganda posters. In your discussion, include the methods used by poster artists to convey those messages.

**Public Participation in Campaigns (pilot)**

Candidates for the presidential election of 2008 have been using the Internet and technology in new and innovative ways. They are using blogs and websites to get out their messages, and, in a new twist, the public has been invited to submit questions for candidate debates and design video campaign ads. What elements would you include if you were designing a video ad for a favorite candidate?

In a well-developed essay, describe the video ad that you would design for a presidential candidate. Include facts and details to illustrate your ideas.

**Qualities of Our Elected Officials (pilot)**

Many people criticize the officials that are elected to our federal, state and local governments. They disagree with their political, economical and/or ethical views on the most prominent issues. Since we, the people, have the right to choose our leaders, what qualities would you look for in a qualified candidate?

Write a multi-paragraph essay in which you discuss the most important characteristics you think an elected official should have. Support your answer with specific details or examples from your own experience or reading.

**Reflections and Advice for the Teenage Years (pilot)**

It has been said that the teenage years can be some of the most challenging years in a person's life. Reflecting on your own experiences, what is the hardest part of being a teenager today? What is the best part? What advice would you give a younger sibling or friend about the challenges of the teenage years?

In a multi-paragraph essay, discuss your reflections of the teenage years and offer advice to younger people based on your experiences.

**Relationships between Work, Energy, and Power (pilot)**

Using a horse, a dog, a wagon, and two hours, create a scenario that illustrates energy, work, the work-energy theorem, and conservation of energy, forces, and power. Use appropriate scientific terminology and include details in your descriptions.

**Response to a Will Rogers Quote (pilot)**

"Never let yesterday take up too much of today." - Will Rogers

What do you think Will Rogers is saying in this quote? Do you agree or disagree.

In a multi-paragraph essay, explain why you agree or disagree with Will Rogers's quote. Be sure to include examples from literature, history, science, film, or your own experience or observations.

**Role of Women in WWII (pilot)**

Women supported the war effort during World War II in many different ways, ranging from joining the military to assuming traditionally male roles in industry, agriculture, and various professions. In a detailed essay, discuss the reasons and ways women supported the war effort during World War II as consumers, industrial workers, and members of military units?

**Science Video Provides Perspective (pilot)**

Some scientific processes take place lightning fast, often involving microscopic elements inside a body or an object. With video, the processes we cannot replicate in a lab or classroom are illustrated through computer graphics, slow-motion photography, and live film footage. How did the video that you viewed allow you to better understand a specific scientific concept or process?

In a well-developed essay, discuss the scientific concept or process in the video and how the media used in the video improved your understanding. Include facts and details to support your discussion.

### **Science Without Religion and Vice Versa (pilot)**

"Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind." - Einstein

Do you agree with Einstein's statement? In a well-developed essay, articulate your position on this issue. Be sure to provide specific details and examples to support your argument.

### **Season Preview (pilot)**

Excitement always surrounds the start of a new sports season. Every team dreams of winning a championship. Writers can use the past performance of a team-coupled with information about current players and performance trends-to predict how a team will perform over the course of a season.

Attend an upcoming pre-season practice at your school, and interview the coach about expectations for the upcoming season. Ask the coach about which areas the team has improved in the most since last year. Ask which areas they are still working to improve. Combine those details with the facts and statistics you've researched from the previous season to predict how the team will do this year. To review an example of a preview, you can go to the [DS Report Season Preview example](#).

### **Senior Profiles (pilot)**

Senior leadership is critical to the success of a high school sports team. Often, the most influential seniors aren't the ones who get the most playing time. The team leader can instead be someone who works hard every day in practice and is a positive presence on the sidelines.

Attend a sports practice or game at your school and ask the coach which non-starting senior provides the most leadership. Then, interview one of the underclassmen on the team to find out what that player's dedication and leadership has meant to him or her. Is it the senior's words or their actions that motivate the team the most?

Write about that senior's most significant contributions to the team and what his or her dedication has meant to teammates. To see an example of an article that is similar to a profile, you can click on the [DS Reporter Feature Story example](#).

### **Sense of Belonging (pilot)**

In order to feel a sense of belonging, one must be comfortable and secure within themselves and their environment. What other factors help someone feel a strong sense of belonging?

In a multi-paragraph essay, discuss the factors that provide people with a sense of belonging. Include details and examples to support your discussion.



### Sketch of an Artist (pilot)

Using books, the Internet, or other resources, research the life of an artist. What important events shaped the life of this artist? What makes him or her unique?

In a well-developed essay, discuss this artist's background and describe his or her artwork. What is your opinion of the artist's work?

### Slavery and the Declaration of Independence (pilot)

"He (King George) has waged cruel war against human nature itself, violating its most sacred rights of life and liberty in the persons of a distant people who never offended him, captivating and carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere, or to incur miserable death in their transportation thither. . . . He has (stopped) every legislative attempt to prohibit or to restrain this execrable commerce determining to keep open a market where (people) should be bought and sold. . . ." - Thomas Jefferson

The paragraph above, included in the first draft of the Declaration of Independence submitted by Thomas Jefferson to the Congress, was struck from the final draft. How might the course of history have been different if this paragraph had been included?

In a well-developed essay, discuss how the course of history would have changed if the Declaration of Independence had included Jefferson's paragraph about slavery. Include facts and details to support your discussion.

### "Starry Night": A Painting of Intrigue (pilot picture)



Van Gogh, *Starry Night*, 1889

Van Gogh's "Starry Night," painted in 1889, is his most famous work of art. The image depicts a night sky with stars and swirling clouds, with a large mysterious structure to the left of the painting and a residential town underneath the night sky. Critics and viewers alike have found this painting intriguing for many years. What do you think makes this painting so intriguing? What makes Van Gogh's use of imagery, style, and colors so unique?

In a detailed essay, explain how the specific features of Van Gogh's "Starry Night," including its style and colors, have contributed to its continued popularity and public adoration and fascination for so many years.

### **State vs. Federal Government (pilot)**

Show that you are able to use the process of "compare and contrast." Write a short essay to compare and contrast the federal government in Washington, D.C., with your state's government. The basic points in your essay are size, structure, and the powers of each government. Add any other details that will enhance your compare-and-contrast project.

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### **Studying the Universe (pilot)**

The study of the Universe is exciting and intriguing because much is still unknown and unexplored. Did an asteroid cause the extinction of dinosaurs? What happens when a star dies? In a detailed essay, describe the aspect of the Universe that you would like to study as a scientist. Include why this subject interests you and ways in which you would study it.

### **Successful Person in a Chosen Occupation (pilot)**

As a student soon entering high school, you have already been presented with information about various career options to get you thinking about the future. Think of a type of profession you are interested in and, specifically, an example of a successful person in this field (this can be a famous person or someone you know). How did this person become so successful? What can you learn from this person in pursuing your dream job?

In a detailed essay, discuss a particular person who became successful in the profession of your choice. Provide details and examples to support your response.

### **Summer Highlights (pilot)**

As the season slowly turns from summer to autumn, students often turn their thoughts to memories of the summer gone by. Think about some of the things you did during the summer months. Did you have or create new opportunities? Was there something you did that you have never done before? Is there anything you would change about your summer if you could go back?

In a detailed response, discuss this past summer, including new experiences or things you wish you could have done before school resumed. Be sure to support your discussion with specific details and descriptions.

### **Summertime College or Career Preparation (pilot)**

As a high school student you may be planning to prepare for college or career with summer activities. There are many things a student can do during the summer, like taking part in a special summer program for high school students at a college or university, participating in a volunteer program, enjoying suggested summer reading, or working in your future occupation or trade.

In a detailed essay, discuss your ideas for a productive summer vacation and how it can be used to help prepare for college and/or your future career. Include examples and details to support your discussion.

### **Supplies to Travel the World (pilot)**

Imagine you are setting out to discover the world on your own. If all you could take with you had to fit into a backpack, what would you take? How would you use each item? Do you think you would eventually carry more or less as you traveled? Why?

In a multi-paragraph essay, describe the items you would carry in your backpack as you traveled to discover the world.

### **Taking Advantage of an Opportunity (pilot)**

“I held a moment in my hand, brilliant as a star, fragile as a flower, a tiny sliver of one hour. I dripped it carelessly, Ah! I didn’t know, I held opportunity.” –Hazel Lee

Being able to take advantage of an opportunity is one of the major factors in leading a successful life. Think of a time you took advantage of an opportunity that arose. How were you able to recognize this chance and how did you benefit from it?

In a well-developed essay, describe a time when you were able to take advantage of an opportunity.

### **The American Revolution: Causes and Effects (pilot)**

You have recently studied the American Revolution in class. In your opinion, what are the most important circumstances or factors that caused the Revolutionary War to occur? In its aftermath, what do you think its most important repercussions, or effects, were?

In a well-developed essay, discuss the causes and effects of the American Revolution. Be sure to use enough detail to allow your audience to understand the event itself, as well as the connections between its causes and effects.

**The Church in the Middle Ages (pilot)**

During the Middle Ages, the Church played a powerful role in the government of Europe and in defining the lives of many Europeans.

In a well-developed essay, identify and discuss events that led to the decline of the power of the Church in the period from 1000 to 1500 AD.

**The Effect of Public Opinion on Trials (pilot)**

Recently, many high-profile court cases have caught the public eye, such as the trials of O.J. Simpson, Michael Jackson, Scott Peterson, and most recently Saddam Hussein. Is it possible that increased public attention has affected the outcome of these trials?

Write a multi-paragraph essay in which you discuss whether or not you think public opinion can have an effect on the verdict of a trial. Be sure to include specific details and examples to support your analysis.

**The Effects of the Watt Steam Engine (pilot)**

In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, the Industrial Revolution triggered a major shift in human history. Many historians say that this era began with the invention of the Watt Steam Engine, which led to many changes in transportation, communication, and business.

Imagine you were alive during the time of the Industrial Revolution and have just witnessed a demonstration of the Watt Steam Engine. In a letter to one of your friends, describe what changes you think this invention will bring about for the world.

**The Elegance of Cell Division Processes (pilot)**

Higher organisms need to have both diploid and haploid cells. The processes of mitosis and meiosis provide these cells in very elegant fashion, ensuring genetic variability in a population and enabling repair of damaged tissue and growth of organisms.

In a multi-paragraph essay, discuss the similarities and differences of the processes and products of meiosis and mitosis. Use appropriate scientific terminology and details to support your discussion.

**The Holocaust: Aftermath (pilot)**

Allied forces on both the Eastern and Western fronts liberated numerous concentration camps as the Second World War wound down. As the enormity of the Holocaust became apparent, many attempts were made to punish the Nazis who implemented Hitler's policies of genocide. Punishment ranged

from the famous Nuremberg Trials to the attempts of "Nazi-hunters" to track down Nazis who had fled around the world.

Using the Internet, books, or other resources, gather research about some of the ways in which the Allies attempted to punish those responsible for the Holocaust. Then, write a well-developed essay in which you present this information. What relevance do these attempts at justice have for the world today?

### **The Human Population (pilot)**

The rate of population growth depends on many factors, and it has increased steadily in many countries since the 1800s. In developing countries, the increased rate of population growth is problematic, while in developed countries, the decreased rate of population growth is problematic.

In a multi-paragraph essay, discuss the causes of population growth and decline and the impact of the rate of population growth on the overall health of a country. Use facts and examples to support your discussion.

### **The Importance of Math in Travel (pilot)**

Transportation is one of the most important aspects of modern society. Math plays an important role in planning for and traveling effectively. In a detailed essay, discuss some of the important ways that math is used in travel.

### **The Lives of Frederick Douglass and Harriet Tubman (pilot)**

Frederick Douglass and Harriet Tubman are two of the most famous African Americans in history. Both were prominent abolitionists who escaped slavery and helped lead numerous other slaves to freedom during the time of the Civil War. Although Douglass and Tubman share many similarities, they also have some differences between them, such as in the way in which they escaped slavery.

In a well-developed essay, compare and contrast Frederick Douglass and Harriet Tubman, explaining their similarities and differences. Provide facts and examples to support your comparisons.

### **The Many Types of Waves (pilot)**

Waves are defined as traveling, standing, sound, and light. They can interfere, diffract, reflect, and refract. We use these different types of waves and their properties in many ways, from mirrors and eyeglasses to speakers and amplifiers.

In a multi-paragraph essay, discuss waves, their properties, and the application of these properties in our everyday lives. Include appropriate scientific terminology and details to ensure a comprehensive discussion.

### **The Shaping of America (pilot)**

There have been many people and events that have shaped America's past and present. Although we tend to think of notable historic events and famous people, our own family members have been involved in shaping our country. What has happened in your life or in the life of one of your family members that tells a story about the shaping of America? Why do you think this story is important in telling the history of the country?

In a well-developed essay, describe an event that you or someone in your family experienced that tells a story of the history of America. Be sure to include details about the time period, facts, examples, and quotes from your family members for support.

### **The Three Components of Cell Theory (pilot)**

In your own words, explain the three components of the cell theory, which is a basic concept of biology.

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### **The Tragedy of Commons (pilot)**

In an article first published in the journal *Science* in 1968, Garrett Hardin used the phrase Tragedy of Commons to describe situations in which individuals, acting in their own self-interest, ultimately deplete shared resources to the detriment of all involved, including themselves. Hardin's theory concerns situations in which it is not technology but morality that must be used to resolve the conflict.

In a multi-paragraph essay, discuss an example that illustrates Hardin's Tragedy of Commons. Include the ramifications of the choices of the individuals involved and the applicability of solutions to the Tragedy of Commons to modern issues with finite resources. Be sure to include facts and examples to support your discussion.

### **The Value of Video on Different Countries (pilot)**

While photos and stories about other countries give us a glimpse into the lives of the people of that culture, video enables an even greater view. With video, we can experience interactions between people, entry into unfamiliar places, and participation in events as if they are happening right before our eyes. How did viewing a video of another country supplement your understanding of that country and its people?

In a well-developed essay, discuss the video on another country and describe how it supplemented your understanding of that country. Include facts and details to support your discussion.

### **The Year in Review (pilot)**

The coming of a new year always prompts nostalgia and a look back at all the things that happened during the current year. Societal, economic, cultural, political, and other kinds of events can have a major impact in just one year. What changes have affected you?

In a well-developed essay, discuss the highlights of economic, social, cultural, political, and world events that impacted people during the course of the year. Be sure to include specific events and illustrate their impact on society.

### **Uniquely American Benjamin Franklin (pilot)**

In *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*, Franklin describes his life experiences through the jobs he held, inventions he created, publications he printed, and political and social philosophies he developed. Franklin has since become an American icon of the period.

In a multi-paragraph essay, describe the characteristics of Franklin's personality and lifetime accomplishments that make him uniquely American. Include facts and details to support your description.

### **Use of a Hydrostatic System to Stop a Car (pilot)**

Hydrostatic systems have interesting properties relative to pressure and force. These properties are put to use in the design of automobile hydraulic brake systems.

In a detailed essay, explain the properties of hydrostatic systems, which make it possible to use pressure on a brake pedal to stop a car. Use appropriate terminology and details to illustrate your explanation.

### **Uses of Nuclear Physics (pilot)**

Nuclear physics developed with our understanding of the particles composing an atom. Imaging for medical and security purposes, energy production, and military weapons has been developed using advances in nuclear physics.

In a multi-paragraph essay, discuss the concept of nuclear physics and practical applications of the properties of the atom. Use appropriate scientific terminology and details in your discussion.

### **Using a Musical Instrument to Produce a Mood (pilot)**

You are composing a piece of music and wish to convey a certain mood by the sound of the music. Choose a mood that you wish for your music to convey to the listener. Describe how you would use the different timbres of the instruments to produce this mood through sound.

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### **Using Geometry to Plan a Memorial Park (pilot)**

You are on the Buildings and Grounds Committee in your city and have been assigned the task of creating a memorial park for veterans who have served in the community. The park will consist of a playground, bathrooms, a parking lot, a memorial fountain, and a spotlight for the fountain. The playground, bathrooms, and parking lot will be connected by sidewalks in the shape of a triangle. The memorial fountain will be placed within this triangle, equidistant from the sidewalks that connect the playground, bathrooms, and parking lot. A spotlight for the fountain will be placed equidistant from the playground, bathrooms, and parking lot. A canopy that will be used for the dedication of the park will cover the area between the playground, bathrooms, and parking lot. The balance point of the canopy must be determined for the center pole or the canopy will collapse.

After determining the centroid, incenter, and circumcenter of the triangle of sidewalks connecting the playground, bathrooms, and parking lot, suggest which of these three points would be the best place for the memorial fountain, spotlight, and canopy's center pole. In a multi-paragraph essay, report your findings for the location of the three objects, supporting their locations with the principles of geometry.

### **Using Math to Determine the Better Weekly Pay Rate (pilot)**

Read the math problem.

Write an essay in which you argue whether it is better to earn a flat rate of \$400 per week or to earn a rate of \$9.50 per hour. Include what factors might make one option better than the other.

In a detailed essay, discuss the strategy you would use to solve the problem. A complete essay will include the steps you would perform, the order in which you would perform them, and the reason you would solve the problem using this strategy. Although a correct answer is important, it is more important that you discuss the process of solving the problem with as much detail as possible.

### **Using Probability to Determine Who Goes First (pilot)**

Read the math problem.

Four friends want to play a game. In order to decide who starts first, two proposals are made.



Kristal proposes that they assign everyone a number and take turns rolling a six-sided die. The player whose number comes up would start the game, and if a 5 or 6 comes up, they roll again.

Clay proposes that they flip 3 coins. If 3 heads come up, Clark would start. If 2 heads come up, Clay would start. If 2 tails come up, Kortney would start. And if 3 tails come up, Kristal would start.

Which of the proposals gives everyone a fair chance of starting the game? Explain your reasoning.

In a detailed essay, discuss the strategy you would use to solve the problem. A complete essay will include the steps you would perform, the order in which you would perform them, and the reason you would solve the problem using this strategy. Although a correct answer is important, it is more important that you discuss the process of solving the problem with as much detail as possible.

### **Using Ratios to Determine the Number of Marbles in a Bag (pilot)**

Read the math problem.

A bag contains a mix of red, yellow, and blue marbles. The ratio of blue to red marbles is 3 to 2, and the ratio of yellow to red marbles is 1 to 4. When 8 blue marbles, 8 red marbles, and 8 yellow marbles are added to the bag, the ratio of blue to red marbles becomes 4 to 3. How many yellow marbles are in the bag after the additional marbles are added? Explain the steps you took to find your answer.

In a detailed essay, discuss the strategy you would use to solve the problem. A complete essay will include the steps you would perform, the order in which you would perform them, and the reason you would solve the problem using this strategy. Although a correct answer is important, it is more important that you discuss the process of solving the problem with as much detail as possible.

### **Using Triangles to Find a Plane (pilot)**

The president of the United States has asked you to assist in finding a plane that has gone down over the Indian Ocean. You have been given the task of choosing a tracking system company to find the plane. You want to locate the plane as quickly as possible.

There are four tracking system companies available for use. Each company uses satellites that will take certain measurements to create a triangle around the possible crash site.

The triangle will be formed from the following three points:

1. The airport from which the plane departed
2. The point where the plane made a counterclockwise turn
3. The plane's last known position

Analyze the sample data given by each company to select the one that will find the plane most efficiently. In a multi-paragraph essay, justify your selection of the company to the president. Use the results of your analysis of each company's sample data to support your justification.

Below is sample data given by each company:

**Company 1:**

Acute Satellite Inc. can provide the following information by using their satellites:

An airplane takes off from Kuala Lumpur going northwest at an angle of  $73^\circ$ . The plane turns counterclockwise  $35^\circ$ . The last known angle is a counterclockwise turn of  $72^\circ$ .

**Company 2:**

Right Distance Inc. can provide the following information by using their satellites:

An airplane takes off from Kuala Lumpur going north at an angle of  $90^\circ$ . The plane travels 1,250 km, and then turns counterclockwise  $35^\circ$ .

**Company 3:**

Butte Inc. can provide the following information by using their satellites:

An airplane takes off from Kuala Lumpur going northwest at an angle of  $38^\circ$ . The plane travels 2,500 km, and then turns counterclockwise and travels another 1,750 km.

**Company 4:**

San Antonio Straights Inc. can provide the following information by using their satellites:

An airplane takes off from Kuala Lumpur going northeast at an angle of  $121^\circ$ . The plane travels 2,850 km. The company can give you the distance from the plane's last known location and the airport, which is 4,050 km.

**Value of Political Gridlock (pilot)**

The term political gridlock can be best described as a time when certain forms of legislation are argued, yet the opinions are evenly divided amongst the two different parties. This leads to an impasse in which little change occurs. Many political historians believe that the Founding Fathers created the four branches of government to force scrutiny of any proposed legislation deemed too radical. Today, many Americans have grown frustrated with political gridlock, believing that there is too little change in laws that are introduced. Many feel that unless either the republicans or democrats control the majority of the branches, little to no change will occur.

In a detailed essay, describe whether you believe political gridlock is a way of keeping the government running smoothly, or if it is keeping America from truly advancing.

### **Weaknesses Caused by the Articles of Confederation (pilot)**

Following the American Revolution, the American people were very fearful of a strong central government like that of England. As a result, the first American government, which was established under the Articles of Confederation, was so weak it could not survive. After looking over the provisions of the Articles, write a description of three main weaknesses of the government that the Articles established. In separate paragraphs, write about each weakness and the problems caused by that weakness.

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### **What are Tangents and Secants? (pilot)**

What are tangents and secants in reference to a circle? What facts do we know about them?

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### **What Does FOIL Stand For? (pilot)**

What does FOIL stand for? Explain how you would use it on  $(a+b)(c-d)$ .

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### **What is a Fraction? (pilot)**

In your own words, explain what a fraction is and give an example.

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### **What is History? (pilot)**

As a student in a history class, you will need to think about and be able to answer some basic questions regarding history. Show that you are ready to begin thinking like a student of history by answering these four questions in paragraph form: What exactly is history? Is history the truth? Where does history come from? Why should anyone study history?

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### **What is Humor? (pilot)**

Individuals define humor in different ways. What may be funny to one person, may not be funny to another. What do you find amusing? What makes you laugh?

Write a multi-paragraph essay in which you examine your own sense of humor. Be sure to support your analysis by including specific examples of what you have read or heard that you found funny.

### **What is Order of Operations? (pilot)**

What is order of operations? How do we use it?

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### **What to Look For When Choosing a College (pilot)**

Now that your high school graduation is quickly approaching, you need to start thinking about college. However, the many different types of schools make it difficult to select one. There are four-year colleges, community colleges, large, public universities, and small, private, liberal arts colleges, among other types of schools. How would you go about choosing the college that is right for you? How important are size, location, cost, available programs, and campus life?

In a detailed essay, describe what is important to you when choosing a college and why it's important. Include examples and details to support your description.

### **Why do You Need to Create Art? (pilot)**

Why do you, as a young artist, "need" to create art?

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### **Why Study the Declaration of Independence? (pilot)**

There are many important documents in the history of the United States. Of those, the Declaration of Independence is considered one of the most important. Why is this document so important? Why do we need to study it?

In a well-developed essay, discuss why it is important that we study and understand the ideas and principles of the Declaration of Independence. Include facts and details to support your discussion.

**Your Body's Fitness Assessment (pilot)**

On fitness assessment days, you use your portfolio to document your BMI, height, and weight. What do these scores tell you about your body?

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