

# Expository Writing Practice



Great Practice  
for Standardized  
Writing Tests!



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Teacher-Written Standards-Based Lesson Plans

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Expository Writing Prompts and Practice  
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**ELA Core Plans**  
Teacher-Written Standards-Based Lesson Plans

# What's Included?

Thank you for buying this teaching unit! The pages included in this packet will help prepare your students for standardized writing tests that require an expository essay. More importantly, the pages included will help your students become better writers!

## **Section 1: Expository Prompt Practice**

Each handout in this section has two writing prompts. Students will practice underlining what the prompt is asking, writing a topic sentence for the prompt, and generating ideas for the body of the paper.

## **Section 2: *Would You Rather* Practice Prompts**

Your students will have fun with these writing prompts! Each handout provides a *would you rather* scenario. Then, students choose their answer and defend it. The purpose in using these prompts is to allow students to practice explaining rather than arguing. With expository writing, students are not arguing or persuading. Many students have a tendency to do this with any type of prompt, so these exercises will help them.

## **Section 3: Quick Prompt Practice**

This section includes a set of prompts that can be used for student writing or for quick practice. Ideas are included for using these prompts in creative ways.

## **Section 4: Student Model Essays**

This section provides a model essay and two essays that need a good bit of work. A page is also included for the teacher to know what to point out to students in each essay. These essays will help students see common errors that students make when writing expository essays.

## **Section 5: Essay Evaluations**

There are two evaluation forms included in this section. You choose the form that is best for your students. Students will use a piece of their writing to complete the form. It will help them see their own strengths and weaknesses and allow them to see if they are missing any important part of an expository essay. These forms are great for revision!

## **Section 6: Meet Margaret**

This is a super cool and fun activity to complete before the standardized writing test. This activity will require students to think of the "old lady" who will be grading their essays. Your students will LOVE this, and you will find that it is a great teaching tool!

# Section One

## Expository Prompt Practice

### **Purpose**

- To help students understand prompts
- To teach students to underline what the prompt is asking them to do
- To practice writing topic sentences
- To generate ideas for prompts – examples, reasons, details

### **Options for Use**

- Use these in class to help students generate ideas for writing prompts. Allow students to share because they can learn from one another!
- Assign these for homework, and then discuss the next day in class.
- Put students with a partner, and allow them to help each other come up with the best ideas.
- After discussing these, allow students to write out the essay on the prompt.
- After completing and discussing several of these, allow students to choose one of the prompts to write out an entire essay.
- After completing the worksheets, pair up students. Allow the partners to pull from their best ideas to write an essay together.
- After completing the worksheets individually, write a class essay together, using different ideas from students.

# Expository Prompt Practice

**Bullying is a problem in many schools. Explain what can be done about it.**

- Underline what the prompt is asking you to do.
- Write your topic sentence on the line below.

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In the box below, list some of the ideas you could write about.

**Think of something that you do well – anything at all. Explain how to do this to someone who knows nothing about it.**

- Underline what the prompt is asking you to do.
- Write your topic sentence on the line below.

---

In the box below, list some of the ideas you could write about.

# Expository Prompt Practice

**Think of the career you would like to have as an adult. Explain your ideal job and why this job would be perfect for you.**

- Underline what the prompt is asking you to do.
- Write your topic sentence on the line below.

---

In the box below, list some of the ideas you could write about.

**Imagine if you could be an animal for one day. What animal would you be? Explain why you would choose to be this animal for a day.**

- Underline what the prompt is asking you to do.
- Write your topic sentence on the line below.

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In the box below, list some of the ideas you could write about.

# Expository Prompt Practice

**Who is the most interesting person you have ever met? Explain what this person is like.**

- Underline what the prompt is asking you to do.
- Write your topic sentence on the line below.

---

In the box below, list some of the ideas you could write about.

**Define a character trait that you think is important (honesty, friendliness, etc). Explain what makes this trait important.**

- Underline what the prompt is asking you to do.
- Write your topic sentence on the line below.

---

In the box below, list some of the ideas you could write about.

# Expository Prompt Practice

**Think of someone you know or someone you have learned about in school whom you admire. Explain why you admire this person.**

- Underline what the prompt is asking you to do.
- Write your topic sentence on the line below.

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In the box below, list some of the ideas you could write about.

**Think of a place that you would like to visit. Explain why you would like to visit this place.**

- Underline what the prompt is asking you to do.
- Write your topic sentence on the line below.

---

In the box below, list some of the ideas you could write about.



# Expository Prompt Practice

**Think about a person from history that you would most like to meet if you could. It can be any famous person who is no longer alive—a military leader or an artist, a hero or a villain. Identify this person and explain why you would like to meet her or him.**

Underline what the prompt is asking you to do.

- Write your topic sentence on the line below.

In the box below, list some of the ideas you could write about.

**Think of the career you would like to have as an adult. Explain your ideal job and why this job would be perfect for you.**

- Underline what the prompt is asking you to do.
- Write your topic sentence on the line below.

In the box below, list some of the ideas you could write about.























# Section 2 *Would You Rather* Practice Prompts

## **Purpose**

With expository writing, students need practice explaining things. Use the following prompts to teach students to explain rather than argue. Many times, students “preach” to the reader by telling the reader what he/she should do or believe. It is also a habit for students to treat every prompt as an argumentative prompt.

In order to write an effective expository essay, students must learn to fully explain their ideas and back them up with facts and personal experiences. Use the prompts included in this section to guide students in developing these skills.

## **Options for Use**

Each prompt will give students two choices. Many students are familiar with would you rather questions because they spend time asking each other these silly scenarios. **Here are some options for using these prompts:**

- Before assigning the writing task, ask the question to the class and have a discussion. This is a great way to generate ideas, and students enjoy talking about the options!
- Ask the *would you rather* question first. Pair up students with opposite answers. Allow them to talk through their reasons before they decide which answer is best. This will help students learn to choose the one that they can write the most about.
- After writing essays, allow students to read them out loud. Make sure that they explained rather than argued.

# Would You Rather?

Would you rather be a cat or a dog? Explain why.

Topic sentence: I would rather be a \_\_\_\_\_

Brainstorm first. What do you think of when it comes to your topic sentence? List reasons.

## Personal experience

Think about times you have been around dogs and cats. Can you think of a personal experience with the animals that could be used to make a point in your essay?

# Would You Rather?

Would you rather have a kangaroo or a koala bear as a pet?  
Explain why.

Topic sentence: I would rather \_\_\_\_\_

Brainstorm first. What do you think of when it comes to your topic sentence? List reasons.

Facts for Your Essay

Look up some facts about the animal that you chose. List these below. Maybe you can use them in your essay.

# Would You Rather?

Would you rather be able to read minds or become invisible whenever you wanted? Explain why.

Topic sentence: I would rather \_\_\_\_\_

Brainstorm first. What do you think of when it comes to your topic sentence? List reasons.

## Personal Experience

Think about a time when you wish you could have read someone's mind, a time you would not have wanted to read someone's mind, or a time you wish you could have been invisible. Maybe you could use this in your essay.

# Would You Rather?

Would you rather be poor and work at a job that you love or be rich and work at a job you hate? Explain why.

Topic sentence: I would rather \_\_\_\_\_

Brainstorm first. What do you think of when it comes to your topic sentence? List reasons.

## Facts for Your Essay

List the benefits of having a lot of money. Then, list the negative things about hating your job. Maybe you could use these in your essay.



# Would You Rather?

If time travel were real, would you rather go back to the past or go to the future? Explain why.

Topic sentence: I would rather \_\_\_\_\_

Brainstorm first. What do you think of when it comes to your topic sentence? List reasons.

## Personal Experience

Think of a time you overheard someone's conversation and found it useful or hurtful. Or, think of a time when you said something you wish you could take back. Jot down these memories. Maybe you could use one in your essay.

# Would You Rather?

Would you rather have the power to hear any conversation or have the power to take back anything you said? Explain why.

Topic sentence: I would rather \_\_\_\_\_

Brainstorm first. What do you think of when it comes to your topic sentence? List reasons.

## Personal Experience

Think of a time you overheard someone's conversation and found it useful or hurtful. Or, think of a time when you said something you wish you could take back. Jot down these memories. Maybe you could use one in your essay.

# Would You Rather?

Would you rather live without the Internet or without a television? Explain why.

Topic sentence: I would rather \_\_\_\_\_

Brainstorm first. What do you think of when it comes to your topic sentence? List reasons.

## Personal Experience

Make a list of what you could not do without the Internet. Then, make a list of what you would miss out on without television. Maybe you could use one in your essay.

# Would You Rather?

Would you rather sweat all the time or always smell skunk?

Explain why.

Topic sentence: I would rather \_\_\_\_\_

Brainstorm first. What do you think of when it comes to your topic sentence? List reasons.

## Personal Experience

Think of a time when you were sweating a lot. What did it feel like? List some negative effects of sweating all of the time. Now, if all you ever smelled was skunk, how would that affect you in your daily life? Maybe you could use one in your essay.

# Would You Rather?

Would you rather visit the bottom of the ocean or the moon?

Explain why.

Topic sentence: I would rather \_\_\_\_\_

Brainstorm first. What do you think of when it comes to your topic sentence? List reasons.

## Facts for Your Essay

Look up some facts about the place that you chose. List these below. You may be able to use them in your essay.

# Would You Rather?

Would you rather be able to eat anything and any quantity of food with no negative health effects, or be refreshed and well rested after only three hours of sleep each night? Explain why.

Topic sentence: I would rather \_\_\_\_\_

Brainstorm first. What do you think of when it comes to your topic sentence? List reasons.

## Personal Experience

Think of what you could do with more time in your day. Also, think about all of the things you would like to eat that you try to avoid due to negative effects.

Maybe you could use one of these in your essay.

# Section 3 Quick Prompt Practice

## “Pull a Prompt”

### **Prompts Out Loud**

Cut out the prompts on the next page, and put them in a bowl or hat. Have a student choose a prompt from the bowl, read it out loud, and brainstorm his/her ideas out loud.

Then, have that student choose another student. This chosen student (student 2) must say a “grabber” or “lead” for that prompt out loud. That student then chooses another student (Student 3).

Student 3 must state a topic sentence for the prompt then choose another student. Student 4 then uses the topic sentence stated by the student 3 and briefly tells what he/she would write about in the second paragraph (1<sup>st</sup> body paragraph). Student 5 will then tell what he/she would write about in the third paragraph (2<sup>nd</sup> body paragraph). Student six will then tell what he/she would write about in the fourth paragraph (3<sup>rd</sup> body paragraph). Now it’s time to choose another prompt.

### **Make a game out of it!**

You can choose to put students in teams and award points each time a student from the team successfully completes the task.

### **Pass Around the Prompt**

You could also do this on paper. Provide a certain amount of time for the introduction to be written and have students pass it to the next person/group, who will write the first body paragraph. Then pass it to the next group who will write the next paragraph, and so on.

# Prompt Practice

What book would you recommend your whole class to read? Explain why.

Explain what you do to keep cool on a hot summer day.

Think of a place where you go to have fun. Explain why this place is fun.

If your principal asked you to improve the lunchroom conditions at your school, what would you suggest? Explain how this would improve your lunchroom.

Think of a problem at your school. Now think of some solutions. Write an essay explaining a problem and a solution to that problem.

If you could change one thing in the world, what would it be? Explain what you would change and why.

If you were to volunteer to work in your community, where would you work? Explain why.

Think about a pet peeve you have. Now write to explain your pet peeve and why it is a source of annoyance or irritation.



# Prompt Practice

Explain the main reasons why you think students drop out of school.

Explain what you think makes a good friend.

If you could make changes to your school lunchroom, what would you do?

What is your favorite time of year? Explain why it is your favorite.

What is the most important rule at your school? Explain why.

Explain what makes your state a great place to live.

Explain what is hard about being a preteen or teenager today.

Explain how music can affect your life.

# Section 4

## Student Essays

In this section, three essays are provided.

- The first essay is a model essay, and the next two need a good bit of work.

### **Options for Use**

- Read each essay with your students, or have them read each one on their own or with a partner. Look for what is done right and what needs to be improved. Suggestions are provided, but you can always add or elaborate based on your students' needs.
- You may want to have students use one of the evaluation forms as they read these essays. These forms are included in the next section of this book. You could complete the evaluation form as a class, or students can complete them individually or with a partner.
- Another idea, especially for the second and third essays provided, is to allow the students to revise the essays. Or, after reading one and critiquing it together, assign your students the same prompt.

# She Stands Out

To most adults at my school, she is just someone who answers the telephones, takes care of testing and occasionally supervises the office. She is in charge of registering new kids and talking to students about their schedules. Most people think of her as just another office person at the school, but Mrs. Brown is not just another person to me. To me, she is a very special person. She is friendly, hardworking, a little crazy and most of all understanding, which is why Mrs. Brown is someone I most admire.

First of all, I truly look up to Mrs. Brown because she is not afraid of what others think. For example, she is a wacky dresser. One day she wore a yellow skirt, lime green shirt, and bright red leggings. Another day she showed up in jogging pants, high heels, and a big sequined bow right on top of her head. Her flamboyant outfits make her look like a Lady Gaga WannaBe who couldn't be. As she walks down the hall each day, students snicker and make rude comments about her, but Mrs. Brown just smiles at them. She doesn't care that people think she looks crazy. She always says that's their problem. I want to become more like that so that I can just be myself at all times and not worry about other people's opinions of me.

Another thing that I admire about Mrs. Brown is that she can truly relate to students because she thinks and acts like a young person. She likes Beyonce and other singers that we like. She can sing just about every song that is popular on the radio. She also knows how to respect us. Whenever a student is sent to the counseling office, she doesn't turn her nose up at him/her and ask, "Why are YOU here?" as though the person is scum of the earth. She always has a smile when she greets students, even those students who are coming in because they are in trouble. I have been to the office with a referral before, and each time, Mrs. Brown asks me to tell my side of what happened. When I'm done, she tells me what she thinks. One time when she pointed out that I really was wrong, I didn't get mad because I knew she cared about me. It is commendable that Mrs. Brown can communicate with students so well.

In addition to her awesome personal appeal, Mrs. Brown is a hard worker, and that is something to be esteemed. In the four years that I have attended this school, I have never once known her to be absent. She also isn't the type of administrator who keeps her door closed and props her feet on her desk all day. She has an open door policy and is always willing to help any student who needs her. Her hard work even extends outside of the school. She takes up tickets at the football games, chaperones after school dances, and works the concession stand at multiple school activities. I am on the basketball team, and just last week at our home game, I spotted Mrs. Brown making popcorn in the concession stand to help our team buy new uniforms. Admiration seems like it's not a good enough word to explain the way I look up to Mrs. Brown's work ethic.

Mrs. Brown is indeed a one of a kind person. She is a ray of light at our school and stands out among the rest. I have learned so much from her, and one day I hope that I can be half the person that she is.

# Things in the Student Essay to Point Out

## Introduction

- Grabber – lead
- Topic sentence – clear and simple
- 

## Body paragraph 1

- Transition – first of all
- 1 clear main idea of paragraph – she is not afraid of what others think
- Word choice – wacky
- She fully supports the main idea of paragraph – with specific examples of how Mrs. Brown dresses
- Voice – the line about the Lady Gaga Wanabe is funny
- The last sentence in this paragraphs touches back to the prompt by saying this is a reason she looks up to Mrs. Brown

## Body paragraph 2

- Transition – another thing that I admire
- 1 clear main idea of paragraph – she can relate to students
- Voice – part about scum of the earth
- Personal example from real life –when she went in with a referral
- Word choice – commendable – another word for admirable

## Body paragraph 3

- Transition- In addition
- 1 clear main idea of paragraph – she is hardworking
- Word choice – esteemed – another word for admired
- Specific examples to support her main idea
- Example from real life – working concession stand
- Last sentence in paragraph touches back to main idea of entire essay

## Conclusion

- Short, yet to the point and effective
- Metaphor – second sentence ties in the title
- Sentence fluency – simple, simple, compound flows well

# Student Sample

**Prompt: If you could visit anywhere, where would you go? Explain why.**

Imagine looking out of your condo to see the large, white Hollywood sign and seeing the crowd of people rushing here and there to arrive at their next stop. If I were able to handpick somewhere to visit, I would choose Hollywood.

To begin with, why would Hollywood be a good choice? Hollywood has many famous sights. It is also a place of music and art. There are many high paying jobs as well.

Moreover, what all is there to do in Hollywood? With about 75 miles of coastline from Malibu to Long Beach, Los Angeles County has a wide range of beach environments from flat, nondescript stretches of sand to scenic coves, rugged bluffs and rocky tide pools. Also, you could go sightseeing. Another thing to do is to go shopping.

In addition, what kinds of people are there? To me, all people are the same, but some think that they are better than others. Those would be classified as the rich snobs. There are also some very famous people in Hollywood. One of the main reasons Hollywood would be my first choice as a dream destination is because I may run into a famous singer or movie star! That would be so awesome!

In conclusion, Hollywood would be the ideal place for me to visit. It is a place where dreams can come true and a place where relaxation and fun prevail. Who knows, maybe one day, I will have the opportunity to look out my window and see that big white sign.

# Things in the Student Essay to Point Out

## Introduction

Grabber/hook is decent. Topic sentence is clear and matches the prompt.

## 1<sup>st</sup> body paragraph

To begin with, why would Hollywood be a good choice? Hollywood has many famous sights. It is also a place of music and art. There are many high paying jobs as well.

Good transition, but the statements made in this paragraph are not explained or elaborated on. After the second sentence, the writer should describe or tell about some of the famous sites. Then, after the third sentence, the writer should do the same for the music and art. It is not enough to just state something in an expository essay. Statements must be explained or elaborated on with examples or facts. The last sentence states *There are many high paying jobs as well*.

This statement probably should not even be in this essay. The prompt is asking the writer to explain why he/she would want to **visit** this place, not live there.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Body paragraph

Moreover, what all is there to do in Hollywood? With about 75 miles of coastline from Malibu to Long Beach, Los Angeles County has a wide range of beach environments from flat, nondescript stretches of sand to scenic coves, rugged bluffs and rocky tide pools. Also, you could go sightseeing. Another thing to do is to go shopping.

The underlined portion is good. It describes the beach. However, the next two sentences are not explained or elaborated upon. The writer also needs to remember the prompt, and end with a sentence that touches back to that prompt, perhaps something like, *Visiting these amazing parts of Hollywood would be unforgettable.* Also, the sentence that states *you could go sightseeing* sounds like the writer is telling the reader what to do. Remember, the prompt asked why **you** would want to visit a place. Make sure as an expository writer, you do not tell the reader what to do. Your job is to explain.

## Things in the Student Essay to Point Out

In addition, what kinds of people are there? To me, all people are the same, but some think that they are better than others. Those would be classified as the rich snobs. There are also some very famous people in Hollywood. One of the main reasons Hollywood would be my first choice as a dream destination is because I may run into a famous singer or movie star! That would be so awesome!

The writer is off topic in the underlined portion. It is a good idea to reread the prompt or at least think of it before each paragraph. The next two sentences are good. There is some sentence fluency as the first sentence is simple and is followed by a complex one. Before the last sentence, however, more details are needed. The writer should perhaps explain what he/she would do if he/she were to see a famous person.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, Hollywood would be the ideal place for me to visit. It is a place where dreams can come true and a place where relaxation and fun prevail. Who knows, maybe one day, I will have the opportunity to look out my window and see that big white sign.

Good conclusion. It touches back to the prompt and ends with a clever line that refers back to the first line of the essay.

# Courageous

**Prompt: Define a character trait, explain what makes it especially important, and tell how you see it expressed in yourself or others.**

Imagine running in the building of fire trying your hardest to get to the room and save the girl that is trapped. Courage is something that shows not one bit of fear.

First, never backing down. Fear is like a bee sting. It will only last for some time. The braveness takes over the fear and throws it away. You have to always stand your ground.

Next, courage is very important. Without courage you will let anybody just simply run you over. You have to learn the fact that you can fight back. Bravery is knowing you can do it even if adversity or fear is in the way.

Last, courage is expressed in many ways. Going back to my introduction, the way the man ran in the building while the fire is growing even more. Standing up to a bully never back down.

As you can see, courage is a special trait. Without it, anybody will run you over. What could you do today? Maybe you could be the guy to save a child's life. Always try to have courage and never have fear.



# Things in the Student Essay to Point Out

## Introduction

The grabber/lead is decent. More details would make it stronger.

The topic sentence is not clear enough. It does not tell the reader what the essay will be about. A better topic sentence would be *One character trait that is especially important to have is courage.*

## Body paragraph 1

The body paragraph is good, but the first sentence is a fragment. This first sentence should be written as a complete sentence and also touch back to the topic sentence. The simile in this paragraph is a great way to “show” the point being made, which is that fear is short lived. However, the point that braveness will take over needs to be supported with an explanation. The writer should explain how fear goes away and bravery takes over. It would be helpful too if the writer provided a real-life example here. The last sentence should be revised to provide a statement that summarizes the point rather than addressing the reader as “you” and instructing the reader to do something.

## Body paragraph 2

The first sentence is complete, includes a transition, and relates to the prompt. After the second and third sentences, it would be better if the writer inserted an example or some other elaboration. After the elaboration is added, the current fourth sentence is a good wrap-up sentence for this paragraph because it touches back to the main point the writer makes in this paragraph. In addition, the writer uses the word *adversity* which is great word choice. To further strengthen this paragraph, the writer could revise the sentence fluency.

## Body paragraph 3

This paragraph begins correctly. However, the remainder of the paragraph needs improvement. The writer needs to elaborate by providing details on the man running back into a burning building. The last sentence used is a fragment. It also sounds like it is telling the reader to stand up to a bully. Remember, the prompt asked for ways the trait is expressed in “yourself or others”. The writer should be talking about himself or others, not telling the reader what to do.

## Conclusion

The conclusion begins with a good first sentence. The questions in this paragraph however could be replaced with a stronger ending, perhaps something about how courage will always prevail, or a quote about having courage.

# Section 5

## Essay Evaluations

### Options for Use

- Give back an essay that the students have written. Instruct them to fill out the evaluation form based on this essay.
- There are two forms for you to choose from. Choose the one best for your students' needs.
- You can use these forms with the student samples provided in this packet too. You may want to do this with the students first. This will provide good practice before students use the forms with their own writing.
- Once completed, students should have a better idea of what they need to improve in their own writing.
- Have students then use the information on this form to revise their original essay.
- Another option is to have students choose one paragraph from the essay to revise. Instruct students to choose a paragraph that needs the most work.

# Essay Evaluation Form A

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Title of essay or Prompt \_\_\_\_\_

Write your topic sentence on the lines below.

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**If you did not have a topic sentence in your essay, write one now on the lines below.**

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**Read through the three paragraphs in the body of your paper. List your three main explanations or focal points below.**

Explanation/point in paragraph 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Explanation/point in paragraph 3: \_\_\_\_\_

Explanation/point in paragraph 4: \_\_\_\_\_

**Look at paragraph two of your paper. Check all that apply to this paragraph.**

- I really do not have one main idea in this paragraph. I wrote about different things.
- I did not really explain my point. Instead, I “preached to” the reader, or told the reader what he/she should or should not do.
- Each statement that I made is followed by an explanation or a supporting detail.
- I did not have enough supporting details to explain. Some of my statements have no explanation at all.
- I fully explained my point in this paragraph with at least three supporting details.
- I got off topic in this paragraph.

# Essay Evaluation

**Look at paragraph three of your paper. Check all that apply to this paragraph.**

- I really do not have one main idea in this paragraph. I wrote about different things.
- I did not really explain my point. Instead, I “preached to” the reader, or told the reader what he/she should or should not do.
- Each statement that I made is followed by an explanation.
- I did not have enough supporting details to explain. Some of my statements have no explanation at all.
- I fully explained my point in this paragraph with at least three supporting details.
- I got off topic in this paragraph.

**Look at paragraph four of your paper. Check all that apply to this paragraph.**

- I really do not have one main idea in this paragraph. I wrote about different things.
- I did not really explain my point. Instead, I “preached to” the reader, or told the reader what he/she should or should not do.
- Each statement that I made is followed by an explanation.
- I did not have enough supporting details to explain. Some of my statements have no explanation at all.
- I fully explained my point in this paragraph with at least three supporting details.
- I got off topic in this paragraph.

**Look at your conclusion. Did you restate your main point? Yes No**

**Write an interesting part of the ending on the lines below.**

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# Essay Evaluation Form B

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Title of essay or Prompt \_\_\_\_\_

**Write your grabber/lead on the lines below.**

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**Write your topic sentence on the line below.**

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**Read through the three paragraphs in the body of your paper. List your three main explanations /focal points below. Jot down, in shorthand, your details, facts, or explanations.**

**Explanation/point in paragraph 2:** \_\_\_\_\_

- Detail/fact/explanation \_\_\_\_\_
- Detail/fact/explanation \_\_\_\_\_
- Detail/fact/explanation \_\_\_\_\_

**Explanation/point in paragraph 3:** \_\_\_\_\_

- Detail/fact/explanation \_\_\_\_\_
- Detail/fact/explanation \_\_\_\_\_
- Detail/fact/explanation \_\_\_\_\_

**Explanation/point in paragraph 4:** \_\_\_\_\_

- Detail/fact/explanation \_\_\_\_\_
- Detail/fact/explanation \_\_\_\_\_
- Detail/fact/explanation \_\_\_\_\_

**Look at your conclusion. Did you restate your main point? Yes No**

**Which words or phrases show that you thought about your word choice? Write three of**

**them.** \_\_\_\_\_

# Section 6

## Meet Margaret



This is a fun activity to do with your students a few days before taking a standardized writing test. It will help students to relax as they have a little fun picturing the “old lady” who will be grading their essays.

- Just to have a little fun, I always tell my students that the old lady who is grading their papers is an 85 year old retired English teacher. I tell them that she has no idea what modern slang means, and if they say something like, “turn up” in their essays, she will turn to the older lady beside her and say, “Mildred, do you know why these children keep writing *turn up*? Do you think they mean the air conditioner?” This always gets some laughs, and students understand that an expository essay is much too formal for slang or phrases that older adults may not understand.
- I also use my best old lady voice and say things like, “Why, this child is not even capitalizing the pronoun I. Why, I’ve never...” I also explain that Margaret is always proper and uses correct grammar. She would never say, “We was at the game.”
- I tell the students that after three hours straight of grading papers, Margaret is about to fall asleep, and she needs your essay to wake her up! She not only loves good spelling, grammar, and punctuation, but she also loves good details, word choice, and voice.

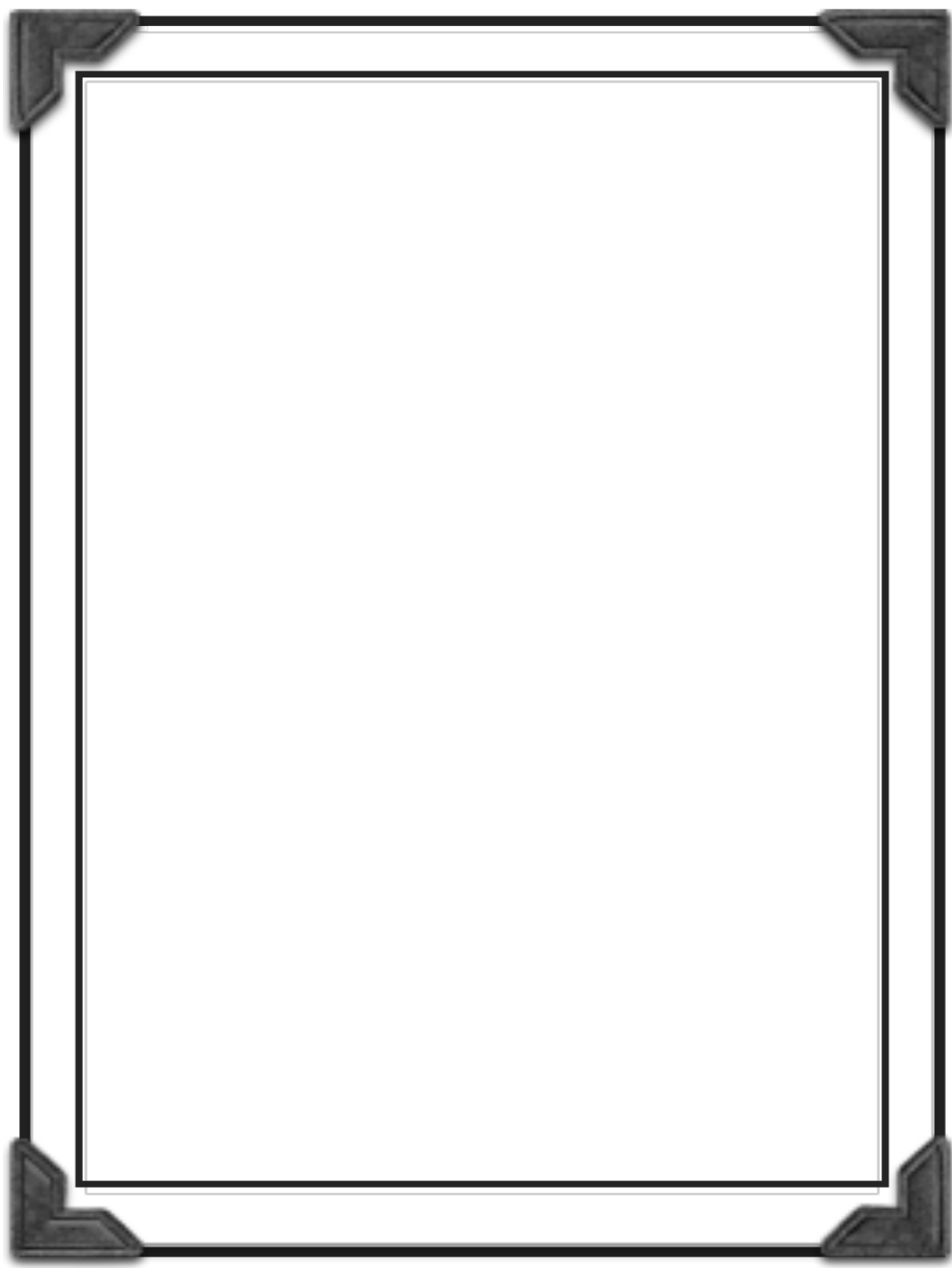
### Meet Margaret Assignment

- Tell your students to draw a picture of the “old lady” grading their papers. You can use the picture frame included in this packet for their final drawing.
- Have them give her a name, (it doesn’t have to be Margaret) and write a biography about her. For those students who need it, you can use the planning sheet to help them think of what to write.
- An example is provided in this packet.

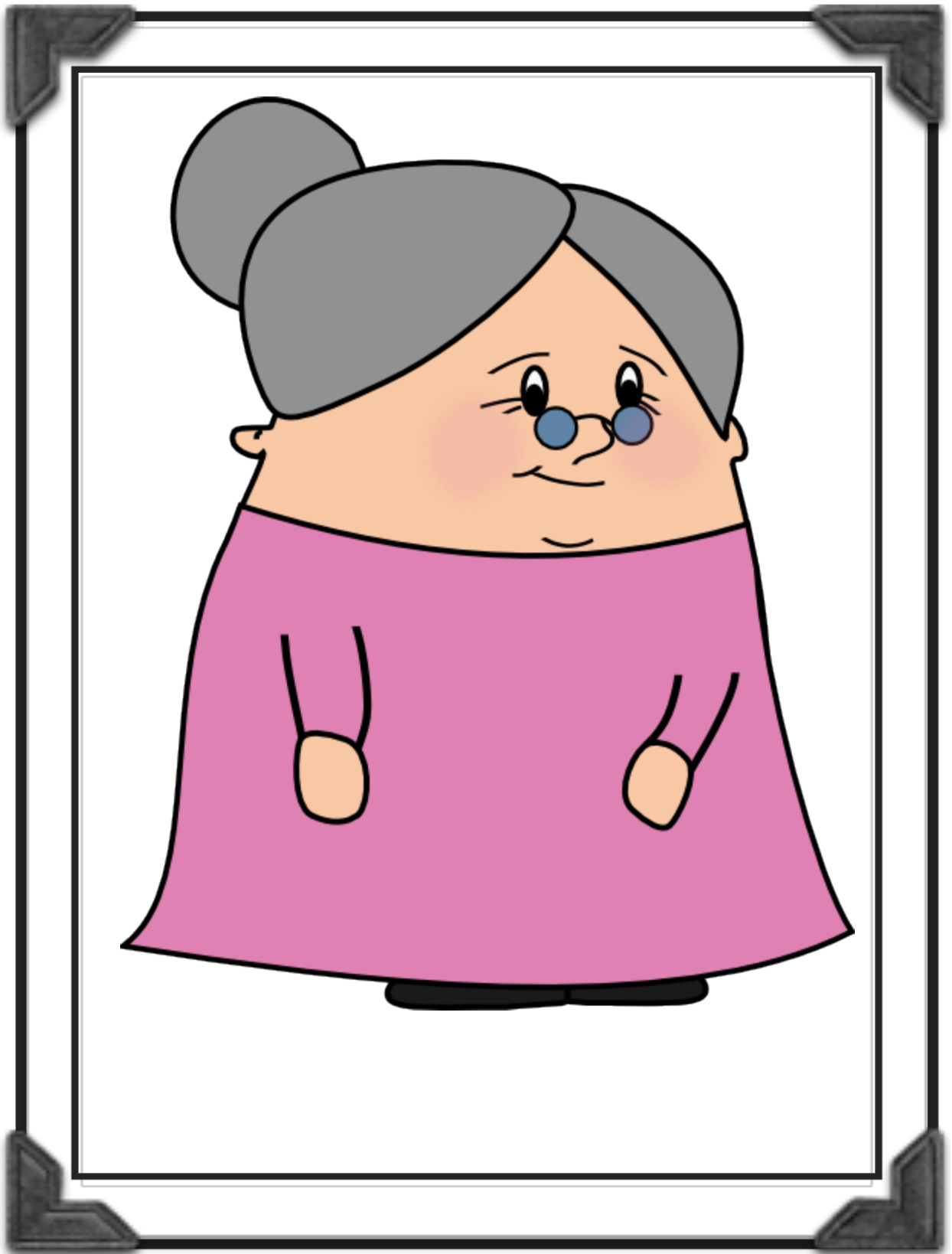
# Planning Sheet



<input type="radio"/>	Meet _____
	Something about her childhood: _____
	College from which she graduated: _____
<input type="radio"/>	Degree(s) she earned: _____
	List her hobbies or what she does in her spare time:
	Years she has been retired & grading essays for test. _____
<input type="radio"/>	List her biggest pet peeves in student writing.







# Sample Biography of Margaret



Margaret Williams, a former English teacher and retired librarian, is 84 year old. She grew up as a normal child, sassy, but proper. Back when Margaret was a child, you could buy a loaf of bread for a coin. Margaret graduated from Yale where she earned a PhD in writing and English grammar.

In her free time, Margaret yells at the radio when artists do not use the right grammar. She also enjoys playing BINGO, knitting, and going to the park with her 27 cats. In 2000, Margaret took a job with ACT and now grades middle school ACT Aspire writing tests. Though she may not readily admit it, she enjoys finding mistakes in papers because it makes her feel somewhat better. If you speak with her for any length of time, at some point in the conversation, Margaret will say, “The one thing that really grinds my gears is a grammar mistake. Apparently, in the twenty-first century it is “cool” to use the wrong “your” and not capitalize the pronoun I.”

Margaret often dozes off while doing her job, but occasionally can be spotted dancing around the room when she comes across a well-written essay. In addition to her job with ACT, Margaret is currently in the process of writing a book about the misuse of the words *affect* and *effect*.

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Happy Teaching! 😊

ELA Core Plans

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