Practice Writing Work Sample Prompts– High School

Narrative	Expository
○ Someone once said, "You can't help a person uphill without getting closer to the top yourself." **Tell a true story** about how you or someone you know learned this lesson.	○ Think of something that you learned outside of school. **Explain** what you learned clearly so that your reader will gain some new information.
○ Helen Keller once said, "Keep your face to the sunshine and you cannot see the shadow." **Tell a true story** about a time when a positive outlook helped you or someone you know succeed.	○ Someone once said, "When the character of a person is not clear to you, look at his or her friends." **Explain** how this quote relates to your or someone you know.
○ Oregon has had some extreme weather in the past few years. **Tell a true story** about a fun or challenging time you had during bad or extreme weather.	○ Parenthood is not easy. **Explain** some of your thoughts on what makes an effective parent.
○ American frontiersman and statesman Davy Crockett once said, "Be sure you're right, and then go ahead." **Tell a true story** about a time when you followed through on something you knew was right.	○ **Explain** to an adult what it's like to be a teenager today.
○ One quality of human beings is our ability to console others, to offer help or compassion when someone needs it. **Tell a true story** about a time in your life when you offered to help a person or when someone offered to help you.	○ Research shows that people communicate messages about who they are by the clothing they wear. **Explain** how and in what ways you think clothing sends messages to other people.
○ **Tell about** something that has really happened to you or to someone you know that fits ONE of the following titles: "Seeking Independence" or "Invincible" or "They All Laughed" or "I'll Never Do That Again."	○ Young children sometimes see things—in real life, on TV, in books, or in movies—which inspire them to make a quick decisions about what they want to be "when they grow up." Sometimes the career is a realistic goal and sometimes it is not. Think of a time when this happened to you and **explain** why your career goals have or have not changed.
○ Lots of people try to give us advice—parents, friends, brothers or sisters, teachers, etc. **Tell a true story** about a time you were given or gave advice. Tell if the advice was followed or not and the results.	○ Think of a successful person. **Explain** by using specific examples the qualities, characteristics, behaviors, etc., that contribute to that person's success.
○ **Tell a true story** based on one of the following quotations: "Absence makes the heart grow fonder" **or** "Familiarity breeds contempt" **or** "Honesty is the best policy.	○ Imagine for a moment that there are no budget problems that affect schools. **Explain** your idea of the best possible education that a school could offer to its students.
○ Life is full of choices. **Tell a true story** about a time when you or someone else had to make a choice.	○ **Write an explanation** of one of the following. You may use some of your own experiences and those of others to clarify your explanation: "A weed is no more than a flower in disguise" (James R. Lowell), **or** "Imagination is more important than knowledge" (Albert Einstein), **or** ○ "Mistakes are opportunities for learning" (Unknown)

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Narrative	Expository
○ People have many admirable character traits, such as courage, enthusiasm, compassion, integrity, friendliness, strength…the list could go on and on. Define a character trait, **explain** what makes it especially important, and tell how you see it expressed in yourself or others. ○ High school is an opportunity to grow and learn. **Explain** to an eighth grade student lessons you've learned about making high school a worthwhile experience. ○ Students in school frequently ask, "Why do I need to know this?" **Explain** how you can use something you have learned in school. ○ Visitors from another country want to learn about your community, region, or country. **Explain** where you would take them and why. ○ Common fads or trends in music, clothing, and recreation come and go. Choose one fad or trend that is popular now and **explain** why it is popular and if you think its popularity will last.	○ Some people feel that professional athletes and entertainers make too much money. Do you agree or disagree? Write a letter to the editor or an essay that would **convince** other people to feel the same way you do about this issue. ○ Geologists predict that a significant earthquake in the Pacific Northwest is inevitable, although of course no one knows when it will occur. **Write a paper to convince** local, state, or federal authorities to help your town or area be prepared for such an occurrence, or to convince your family to adopt an emergency plan that you propose and discuss. ○ Many people think that the media goes too far as reporters pursue celebrities and athletes for news stories. Others believe that these famous people should accept intrusions on their personal lives as the price of fame. Take a position on this issue and **write a paper to convince** others to agree with your point of view. ○ Your school is considering offering a new class. The New Course Committee wants to choose one that will be useful and interesting to high school students. What new course would you like to see taught? Propose a new class for your school and **convince** the committee that they should add this class. ○ Many people think that classic literature is no longer relevant while others insist that educated people read the classics. Take a stand and **write a paper to convince** your reader that students either should or shouldn't have to read classic literature.

Practice Writing Work Sample Prompts – High School

Persuasive	Imaginative
○ Controversy surrounds the concept of Reality T.V., which has exploded in popularity as a form of entertainment. Take a stand on the merits of reality television programs, or television viewing in general, and **convince** your readers to agree with you. ○ Most people have favorite entertainers, sports teams, breeds of dogs or fast food restaurants. **Write a paper to persuade** someone else that your choice is great. ○ Take a position on an environmental issue (pollution, endangered species, recycling or anything else) and **convince** your reader to agree with you. Your city or town would like to build something for the community to enjoy. **Write a paper to convince** your community that your idea of what to build is the one they should choose. ○ Garage sales often include strange or unusual objects. **Make up an imaginative story** about something purchased at a garage sale. ○ You or someone else is standing in the middle of a stadium, concert hall, or auditorium. **Write an imaginative story** about what's happening and how the person got there. ○ **Make up a story** that includes the line, "I knew I was making a mistake when I picked up the phone." ○ The titles of many published works are so intriguing that their very names can suggest many images, ideas, or stories. **Make up a story** of your own inspired by one of the following published titles: (Be sure not to re-tell the original story!) "Great Expectations," "Small Wonder," or "Operating Instructions." ○ You are given a chance to exchange places with one person (alive now or anytime in the past, or fictional) **Make up an imaginative story** about what happens.	○ **Write an imaginative story** that incorporates one of the following ideas in some way: "The Passport," "The Hole in the Wall," or "The Play Station." ○ Often stories are based on a character who is unusual in one dramatic way. The character's behavior, beliefs, attitudes, or skills set up the main conflict of the story. Create a character with an unusual quality and **write an imaginative story** about this character. ○ Imagine that you suddenly had to go into hiding. **Write an imaginative story** telling why you have to hide and what belongings you would take and where you would go. Be sure to make your story original—not one you've heard before. ○ **Write an imaginative story** with ONE of these three titles: "A Rusty Bicycle" or "The Crumpled Paper" or "Nine Steps." ○ What if you felt pain when you cut your hair or fingernails? What if animals and plants can think and feel emotions? What if fire hydrants were spies for a secret organization? **Make up a story** in which an ordinary thing or event turned out to be very different from what humans usually expect. ○ Technology has made huge changes in our lives. **Make up an imaginative story** about a person or family or group living today without the benefits of some modern convenience most of us depend on. ○ **Write an imaginative story** using one of the following titles: "Once bitten, twice shy" **or** "Don't count your chickens before they are hatched" **or** "Once in a blue moon."