

PRENTICE HALL  
WRITING AND  
GRAMMAR



# PRENTICE HALL WRITING AND GRAMMAR



Grade Eight

PEARSON EDUCACION DE MEXICO

EMPLAR PARA EVALUACION

PROHIBIDA SU VENTA



Upper Saddle River, New Jersey  
Boston, Massachusetts

# WRITING AND GRAMMAR

## Grade Eight

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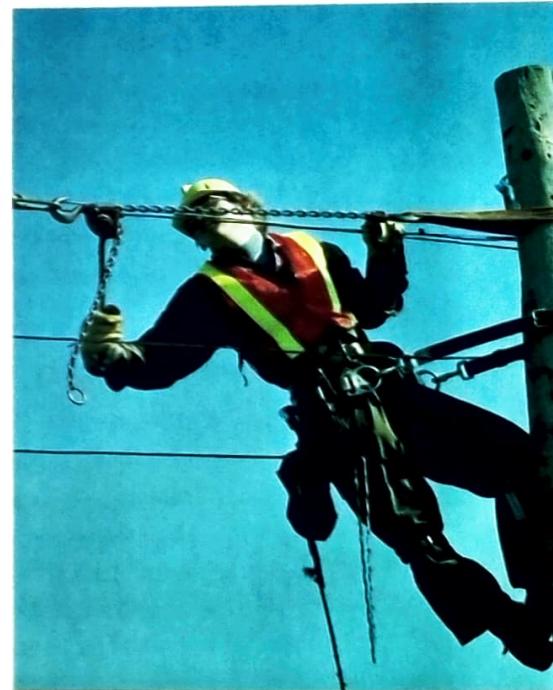
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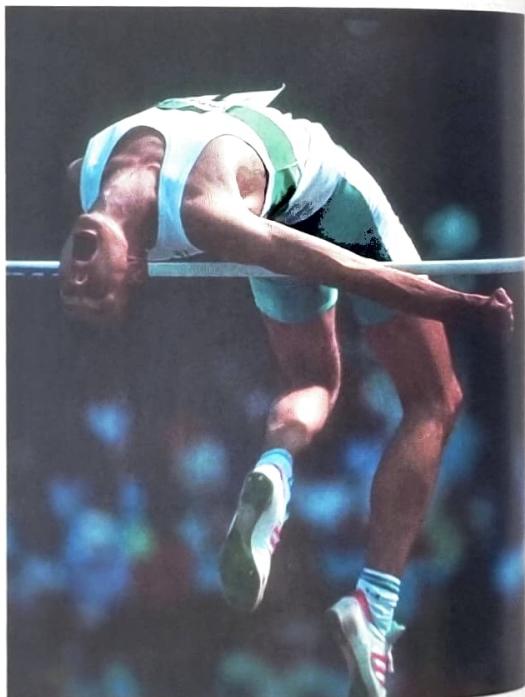
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A painting by Elmer Bischoff titled "Orange Sweater" from 1955. It depicts a person wearing an orange sweater and a hat, sitting on a green bench. The background is a textured, light-colored wall.

PART

1

# Writing

*Orange Sweater*, 1955. Elmer Bischoff. San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, California



## Writing in Everyday Life

A writer writes—it's as simple as that. Every time you use a pen or type on a keyboard, you are a writer. There is no big mystery about being a writer. However, being an effective and powerful writer takes time, practice, and self-awareness.

You have already grown a great deal as a writer. You have advanced from writing your name, using newly learned alphabet letters, to composing thoughtful essays for school. Today, you use writing for a wide variety of important daily tasks. Your writing takes many forms: phone messages, a journal, business letters, e-mail, stories, reports, invitations, and more. Sometimes, you write a quick note or a sign in just a few minutes. Other times, you take weeks to plan and complete a larger project, such as a persuasive essay or a short story.

▲ **Critical Viewing**

For what purpose do you think this boy might be writing? [Speculate]

## Why Write?

Countless situations require you to communicate clearly with others. Writing is one of the most important tools for achieving that communication. Of course, speaking is a vital part of communication, too. Unless it is recorded, though, a discussion disappears except in memory. Writing leaves a permanent record of your ideas.

## Developing Your Writing Life

Writing has an advantage over speaking. As a writer, you can collect and focus your thoughts before you share them with others. Writing helps you explore and develop your thoughts. Author Joan Didion explains that she writes “entirely to find out what I’m thinking, what I’m looking at, what I see and what it means. What I want and what I fear.” Writing can help you identify your own strengths and reach your own goals.

For example, when you begin to write a remembrance, your guiding memory might be vague or unclear. As you write, you will discover specific details that help you bring your memory to life. The process of writing actually sharpens and refines your remembrance.

### Keep Track of Your Ideas

Uncovering ideas is the first part of a writer’s work. Jack London said, “You can’t wait for inspiration. You have to go after it with a club.” You must hunt for good ideas and develop reliable methods for keeping them once you find them.

**Writer’s Notebook or Journal** Carrying a small notebook is a great way to be ready when inspiration strikes. You can jot down all sorts of ideas in your writer’s notebook. Copy down a few lines of a conversation you have had with a teacher. Write down an advertising slogan that makes you think or makes you laugh.

**Researcher File** Many of your most unusual ideas will come from doing some research in a library or on the Web. Writer Zora Neale Hurston explained that “research is formalized curiosity. It is poking and prying with a purpose.” You can create a research file to keep track of interesting articles, Web pages, and other resources. You can also include note cards that you create while researching a specific topic. Each note card might contain a quotation or fact and its source.

## Writers in ACTION

*Poet Maya Angelou prefers to write in hotel rooms where she is “surrounded by no distractions. . . . No milkmaids, no flowers, nothing. I just want to feel. . . .”*

*To get started, she often reads something by a favorite author. Reading reminds her of “how beautiful, how pliable, the language is, how it will lend itself. If you pull it, it says, ‘Okay.’ I remember that, and I start to write.”*

## Keep Track of Your Writing and Reading

**Writing Portfolio** Monitoring your writing progress is an essential part of growing as a writer. To assemble a writing portfolio, collect final versions of your favorite writing. You can also include earlier drafts to show your progress.

An effective writing portfolio is a living record. Review your work regularly in order to monitor your writing accomplishments and challenges. Update your portfolio's contents, removing work you no longer want to highlight or adding a new work that makes you feel particularly proud.

**Reader's Journal** Reading the works of other writers will often stimulate ideas of your own. Keep a journal to comment or reflect on what you read. Copy quotations that capture a writer's style. Describe unique points of view or organizational methods. You might even include notes about how articles or books could be translated into films or documentaries.

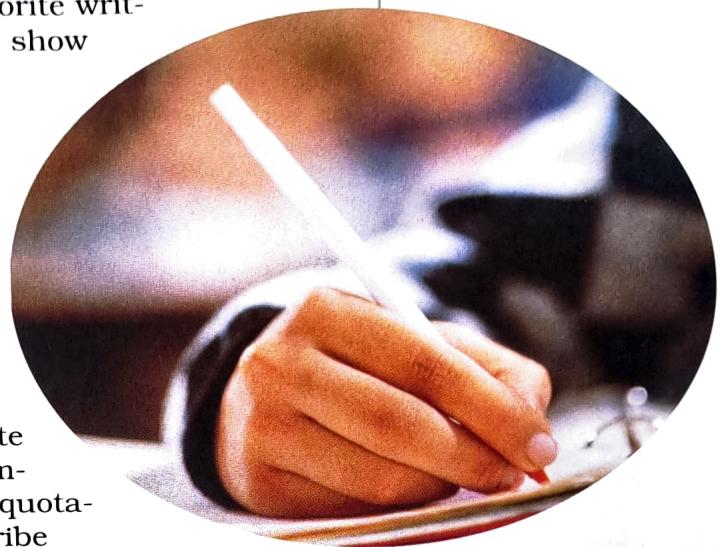
### Try Different Approaches

All writers develop their own favorite writing habits. The more you write, the better you will be able to make writing decisions that work for you.

**Getting Started** Some writers get their best ideas while sitting quietly in a place they know well. Others gain inspiration from observing an active public place, reading a favorite author, or listening to particular music. Experiment with strategies that help you find new and interesting ideas. When you get an idea, make a note about how you got it: Where were you? What triggered the idea? Soon, you will have a good idea about which places and events are likely to inspire you.

**Writing a Draft** The author John Steinbeck gave this advice to writers about drafting: "Write freely and as rapidly as possible and throw the whole thing on paper. Never correct or rewrite until the whole thing is down. 'Rewrite in process' is usually found to be an excuse for not going on." Not all writers agree. Some prefer to make their changes as they draft.

**Improving Your Work** You will discover preferences for editing and revising, too. Even if you did some crossing out and rewriting while you drafted, you will probably want to make more changes. You may want to take a break and then return to the draft by yourself. Or, you may prefer to ask a peer reviewer to help you look for sections to improve.



▲ **Critical Viewing**  
What advice would you give to a student creating a writing portfolio for the first time?  
[Analyze]

## Plan to Write

Some types of writing feel almost automatic. You might not have to think very hard to fill out an application or write down a phone message. Other writing requires considerably more time and attention. If you are writing a complex video script, taking an essay test, or drafting a business letter, you are juggling many parts of a large writing project. You can make it easier to keep track of everything you want to say by organizing your writing life.

## Organize Your Environment

Writing is both a mental and a physical process. Your writing environment must suit both aspects. The physical process is supported by choosing a constructive setting and appropriate materials. Your mental process requires support, too. Set up an environment that is encouraging and creative.

**Choose the Right Spot** The setting in which you write can greatly affect your productivity. Find a place where you won't be interrupted. Background sounds can be annoying or inspiring. Some writers work best to the sounds of music or birds. Customize your environment to suit your tastes.

**Prepare Your Materials** Choose writing materials that you find comfortable. Also, make sure that you have enough materials before you begin. You don't want to run out of paper or ink once you're writing.

**Budget Your Time** A schedule can help you stay on track while completing a long writing project. Begin with the final deadline and work backward. Write the due date on a calendar. Then, choose a date on which to begin or complete each stage in the writing process.

### NOVEMBER

	1	2 Choose biography subject and begin research	3	4	5	6
7	8	9 Draft biography	10	11	12 Review draft with peer review team	13 Revise
14 Finish revising	15	16 Proofread biography	17	18 Biography due	19	20

# Sharing Your Work

## Work With Others

Your personal writing process can and should be adapted to include other people. You will find many opportunities to cooperate during writing.

### Group Brainstorming

The expression “the more, the merrier” often applies to generating new ideas. Group brainstorming is an excellent strategy for breaking through writer’s block—the feeling that you just don’t have any ideas. Brainstorming involves freely suggesting ideas without stopping to judge them. Bouncing ideas off other people in a group can help you fill a page with topics and ideas that might deserve further exploration.

### Collaborative and Cooperative Writing

You can tackle almost any writing project with a partner or a team. Team members can share the writing tasks. For example, when working on a video script, one teammate might create the storyboard and write descriptions of locations; another might write interview questions; still another might prepare the narrative voice-over text. Writing with others can inspire you to break old habits and try new strategies, too.

**Peer Reviewers** A peer reviewer can help you review a draft and look for passages that are particularly strong, as well as those that need work. A good rule of thumb to follow when working with others on your writing is this: Consider their comments and then make up your own mind.

### Publishing

Sharing your work through publication can be a satisfying conclusion to your writing process. Many magazines, Web sites, and contests accept student submissions. Look through your portfolio for work you would like to share with a wider audience. Consult with your teacher or a librarian for suggestions regarding places to publish, or see page 815 for a list of student publications.



### ▲ Critical Viewing

Name two guidelines that these students should follow while writing collaboratively.

[Analyze]

## What Are the Qualities of Good Writing?

**Ideas** Many writers choose the same topics to write about—but each writer has his or her own ideas about each topic. Your ideas are what will make your writing different from the writing of others. Don’t simply offer readers information they already have: share your unique ideas and insights.

**Organization** If writing is to be effective, it must be understood. Organize your writing so that readers can follow its internal structure. Give information in the right amount and in the right order.

**Voice** When you call friends on the telephone, many of them probably recognize your voice even before you identify yourself. As a writer, too, you have a distinctive voice. Learn to develop your writing voice. Let your personality show in the way you express yourself, while still observing the conventions of written English.

**Word Choice** If you just asked a waiter to “bring food,” you could end up with any one of a wide variety of dishes. You are probably more precise when you order something to eat—you use precise words with precise meanings. As a writer, help your readers understand exactly what you mean by using the most precise word for your purpose. Consider the connotations, or associations, of words as well as their denotations, or dictionary meanings.

**Sentence Fluency** Good writing contains a variety of sentence patterns and lengths. Sentence variety creates a flow that sounds smooth and polished.

**Conventions** When people share a language, certain rules or conventions make it possible for everyone to communicate effectively. When you write, follow the conventions for English—the rules of grammar, usage, and mechanics.

## Reflecting on Your Writing

As you review your writing portfolio, or before you begin a new project, spend some time thinking about your accomplishments and goals. Ask yourself these questions:

- Of what piece of writing am I the most proud? Why?
- What specific types of writing would I like to try?
- Did I ever feel intimidated by a blank piece of paper? How did I conquer my fear? What strategy might I try next time?

You may find it useful to share your responses with a partner and to note your ideas in your writer’s journal.

# **Standardized Test Preparation Workshop**

## **Responding to Writing Prompts**

As shown in this chapter, writing is an integral part of your everyday life. Because writing is one of the most powerful communication tools you will ever use, it is important that you express your ideas clearly. Your ability to communicate through writing is often measured when you respond to a writing prompt on a standardized test. When scorers evaluate your writing, they will look for evidence that you can

- respond directly to the prompt.
- make your writing thoughtful and interesting.
- organize your ideas so that they are clear and easy to follow.
- develop your ideas thoroughly by using appropriate details and precise language.
- stay focused on your purpose for writing by making sure that each sentence you write contributes to your composition as a whole.
- communicate effectively by using correct spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, usage, and sentence structure.

The process of writing for a test, or any kind of writing, can be divided into stages. Plan to use a specific amount of time for prewriting, drafting, revising, and proofreading.

Following is an example of one type of writing prompt that you might find on a standardized test. Use the suggestions on the following page to help you respond. The clocks next to each stage show a suggested plan for organizing your time.

### **Sample Writing Situation**

Read the following quotation. In an essay, explain why you agree or disagree with the quotation. To support your position, use examples from literature as well as from personal experience.

“It is neither wealth nor splendor, but tranquility and occupation, which give happiness.”

—Thomas Jefferson

### **Test Tip**

Some tests limit the time or space allowed for a response. Know the rules of the test before you begin responding so that you can plan the best way to use your time and space.

## Prewriting



Allow about one fourth of your time for prewriting.

**Identify Key Words** Look over the prompt, and identify exactly what you are being asked to do. In this case, you are being asked to explain why you agree or disagree. You are being asked to take a position. Further, the prompt specifically asks you to use examples from literature as well as personal experience.

**Use an Organizer** Jot down notes in an easy-to-read format. Use a cluster diagram or a two-column chart to lay out your position and several examples. Then, jot down details around each of the examples. Finally, use numbers or letters to identify which ideas and points you will use at the beginning, middle, and end.

## Drafting



Allow almost half of your time for drafting.

**Begin With a Strong Introduction** In your introduction, express in your own words how you will address the prompt. However, avoid falling into the trap of simply restating the prompt. For example, if you agree with the quotation, you might begin by writing, “I think I would have gotten along very well with Thomas Jefferson if I had lived during his time. Although he himself was wealthy, his words reveal his understanding that other factors are more important in achieving happiness.” Beginning with such a statement addresses the prompt, and it shows a little more thought than if you simply restate the prompt by beginning “I agree with the quotation from Thomas Jefferson.”

**Follow the Directions** In the body of your response, make sure that you follow the directions given in the prompt. If examples from literature are called for, include them. If you don’t have any examples jotted down in your prewriting notes, look over your key points, and identify at least one character or situation from literature that illustrates those points.

## Revising, Editing, and Proofreading



Allow a little more than one fourth of your time to revise, edit, and proofread your work.

**Fine-Tune Your Work** After drafting, review your response to make sure that your ideas flow logically.

Neatly insert transitions if the connection between one paragraph and the next is not clear. Finally, check that you have used complete sentences and that you have observed the conventions of spelling and mechanics.