

GHSWT Prompts

Writing Topic, Number 01

Writing Situation

There's an old saying, "There ought to be a law . . ." Some people might also say, "There ought to be a better law." Think of a law that does not exist but should. Or, think of an existing law that should be changed. You may choose to take a serious or humorous approach to the topic.

Directions for Writing

Write a speech that you will read aloud to your classmates. Convince your classmates that your law should be passed. Include reasons and examples to support your law.

Writing Topic, Number 02

Writing Situation

The local school board of education is considering requiring high school students to wear a standard school uniform. The requirement would go into effect at the beginning of the next school year. The board has provided several months for interested persons to react to the proposal. Decide how you feel about the proposed requirement.

Directions for Writing

Write a speech that will be read at a school board meeting and later published in the local newspaper. Clearly express your position and include support to convince board members to agree with your viewpoint.

Writing Topic, Number 03

Writing Situation

Alvin Toffler, author of Future Shock, referred to modern society as the "throw away" generation. As locations for garbage disposal fill to capacity, communities are faced with the problem of handling waste materials. The students in your civics class have studied ways to solve the solid waste problems in your school. They identified the problems in your school environment and considered alternative ways to reduce the quantity of waste. As spokesperson for the class, it is your job to persuade your school's student body and administration to support their recommendations.

Directions for Writing

Write a feature article for the school newspaper in which you present the alternative solutions for reducing the quantity of solid waste in your school environment. Try to persuade your readers to support the proposed program. Include reasons, examples, and evidence to convince the readers to agree with your position.

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Writing Topic, Number 04

Writing Situation

Health care advancements have resulted in people living longer. Many Americans now live well beyond the age of 65. This older generation consists of people with various experiences, talents, and expertise. Many of these senior citizens have retired from the workforce and can now use their talents in the service of their community. Think of how your community could benefit from the contributions of these older Americans.

Directions for Writing

Write a speech to be given at an organization of senior citizens explaining your ideas. Convince the senior citizens that they should give their services to benefit the community. Provide logical arguments and supporting details.

Writing Topic, Number 07

Writing Situation

The State Board of Education requires that in order to participate in competitive inter-scholastic activities (i.e., competitions between schools), middle grades and high school students must pass five classes. Some students and parents think that this requirement should apply for participation in all extracurricular activities (competitive and noncompetitive). Decide what you think about this idea.

Directions for Writing

Write a letter to the State Board of Education in which you present your position on this issue. Include reasons and examples to support your opinion. Try to convince the board members to agree with your views.

Writing Topic, Number 10

Writing Situation

Students in a U.S. history course are studying required military service. Some of the students believe that men and women between the ages of 18-35 should be required to serve at least two years in the United States Armed Forces. Other students believe that military service should be voluntary. Decide whether you agree or disagree with required military service.

Directions for Writing

Write a paper to convince students in the history course to take your side on the issue. Include reasons, examples and evidence that would lead the students to support your position.

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Writing Topic, Number 13

Writing Situation

Traditionally, the military has existed to prepare soldiers for the wartime defense of our country. While the need for defense will continue, the declining threat of world warfare raises the question of the role of the military when America is not at war. Some people believe that military duties should change. For example, our soldiers have assisted victims of natural disasters in the United States. Decide what you think the role of the military should be when the possibility of a major war is unlikely.

Directions for Writing

Your U.S. Congressional representative is currently serving on the House Armed Forces Committee. The representative will visit your school to hear student opinions. Write a speech which explains your beliefs about the role of the military during peacetime. Include convincing reasons and examples.

Writing Topic, Number 16

Writing Situation

Historically, Americans have shown how much they value education by providing free education for all students from kindergarten through high school. Many Americans now believe that education should be extended to include free or low cost college or vocational training after high school. Do you believe that some form of education should be provided to high school graduates at no cost or at a low cost?

Directions for Writing

Write a letter to your legislator clearly expressing your position on the issue of free or low cost education or training for high school graduates. Convince the legislator to support or oppose free or low cost education.

Writing Topic, Number 22

Writing Situation

Atlanta and the state of Georgia will host the Olympic Games in 1996. For many people, this event means two weeks of watching athletic performances by some of the best athletes in the world. However, some people believe that since the Olympics began, the "true Olympic spirit" has been lost or forgotten. They say that too much attention is now focused on the Olympics as a sporting event and a business venture, rather than promoting international goodwill and understanding. Decide whether you agree or disagree that the Olympic spirit has been "lost" or "forgotten."

Directions for Writing

Write a speech that you will give in a social studies class debate on the issue of the Olympic spirit. Express your opinion clearly with convincing reasons and specific examples.

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Writing Topic, Number 23

Writing Situation

Too many American high school students drop out of school. In our own state, parents, teachers, and school administrators are eager to find ways to encourage students to stay in school and complete their education. Think of reasons that students quit school and how high school dropouts could be prevented.

Directions for Writing

Propose a plan that will encourage students in your community to stay in school. Your plan will be presented at a meeting of parents and teachers. Include information that will show how your plan would keep students in school.

Writing Topic, Number 25

Writing Situation

Few, if any, Americans would question that violence is one of our nation's major problems. Of late, however, teen violence has received increased attention. A parent organization in your community has been formed to address the growing problem of teen violence. They have asked young people for recommendations. Think about what you want them to know.

Directions for Writing

Write a detailed letter to the parent organization that will be distributed and read at their next meeting. In the letter, propose an effective way to reduce teen violence. Include enough information for the parents to understand how your plan would work.

Writing Topic, Number 29

Writing Situation

The issue of social promotion has been widely debated. Elementary students are sometimes placed in the next grade, even though they have not performed successfully in the lower grade. Some experts believe that keeping children in one grade for two years may damage their self-esteem. Other experts believe that promoting a student who is not academically prepared is unfair to the student. Your school board is considering the social promotion issue. What do you believe?

Directions for Writing

Write a letter to the school board that clearly states your beliefs about the practice of social promotion. Try to convince the board to agree with your position by including reasons and examples that support your arguments.

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Writing Topic, Number 34

Writing Situation

American society is composed of many different kinds of people. This diversity includes differences in age, culture, gender, race, and religion. Different groups often have unique needs, values, and concerns. Some parents believe that schools should promote awareness and appreciation of differences among people. What do you believe your school can do to teach about the diversity of America's people?

Directions for Writing

Write a paper you would read aloud in class in which you present a plan for helping high school students understand and appreciate differences among the American people. Express your opinion clearly with convincing reasons and specific examples.

Writing Topic, Number 35

Writing Situation

The business world has adopted the idea of cooperation and team work to increase productivity and solve problems. The belief is that teams can accomplish more than one person alone. Your English teacher has announced that your class might do major projects working in teams. If you had a choice, would you choose to work as a team or to work alone?

Directions for Writing

Write a letter to your teacher convincing him or her that students should or should not work in teams. Include reasons and examples in support of your position.

Writing Topic, Number 40

Writing Situation

Advancements made in health care have resulted in people living longer. Many Americans now live well beyond the age of 65. This older generation consists of people with various experiences, talents, and expertise. Many of these senior citizens have retired from the workforce and can now use their talents in the service of their community. Think of how your community could benefit from the contributions of these older Americans.

Directions for Writing

Write a paper to be presented at a meeting of the city council in which you describe your ideas for using the talents and expertise of senior citizens. Convince the city council that your community would benefit from using the services of senior citizens. Provide concrete evidence and supporting details.

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Writing Topic, Number 41

Writing Situation

While looking good takes time and money, there are those who believe the effort and expense are worth it. There are others who say that we are too concerned with appearance. Do you think people place too much importance on this concern?

Directions for Writing

Write an essay for your English class that presents your position on this issue. Give specific examples to convince your classmates that people do or do not place too much emphasis on looking good.

Writing Topic, Number 42

Writing Situation

With the development of space travel, living beyond the planet Earth has become a possibility. You are one of the people who have been chosen to colonize another planet. The planet is already supplied with the basics of food, clothing, and shelter. Each colonist can take one item. Decide what one item you want to take with you.

Directions for Writing

Write a speech to your fellow colonists that justifies your choice. By presenting a well-developed argument, convince them that your item should be taken to the new planet.

Writing Topic, Number 44

Writing Situation

The issue of teens and cars is widely debated. Some people believe that having a car in high school is a necessity. Others believe that cars play too great a role in a teenager's life.

Directions for Writing

Write an article for your school newspaper discussing the advantages and/or disadvantages of high school students having cars. Include reasons, examples, or evidence to support your opinion.

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Writing Topic, Number 51

Writing Situation

Many adolescents have difficulty making the move to high school. In response to this problem, the board of education has decided to require that all first year high school students attend an orientation workshop just before school begins. You have been selected to serve on the committee which will plan the orientation activities.

Directions for Writing

Write a report to be presented to the workshop planning committee in which you make recommendations for the activities and information that should be part of the program to prepare students for high school. Support your recommendations.

Writing Topic, Number 57

Writing Situation

Many high school students have part-time jobs after school and on the weekends. Some students think that the money they earn should be entirely theirs to spend. Others think that they should contribute all or part of their earnings to their families. Decide what you believe working teens should do with their earnings.

Directions for Writing

Write a letter to younger teens who are about to begin working. Your letter should offer advice about how the teens should use their earnings. Support your advice with reasons, examples, or evidence.