

Tips for Taking a Timed Writing Test – Essay (summary, response to literature, persuasive)



1. Carefully read the prompt. (Suggested time: 2 minutes)

- What are you being asked to do?
- Who is your audience supposed to be?
- Have you been given a specific length?
- What are you supposed to include?

2. Read the article or story (if necessary.) (Suggested time: 10 minutes)

- Read the text carefully.
- Mark-up important parts of the text.
- Think about the main ideas being expressed.

3. Write a thesis statement. (Suggested time: 3 minutes)

- Write a clear, single sentence thesis statement that reflects your opinion towards your topic.
- Writing a thesis statement now will help you focus your ideas as you gather evidence to support your opinion.

4. Plan the essay. (Suggested time: 10 minutes)

- Think about sequencing. What is the most logical order for presenting your ideas?
- Make an outline to organize your evidence.
- Think about how you're going to write your introductory and concluding paragraphs.

5. Write the essay. (Suggested time: 30 minutes)

- Follow your plan.
- Keep looking back at the text for quotations and other evidence to support your thesis.
- Think as you write.
- This is where you will spend most of your time. Give it your best effort!

6. Reread and edit one last time. (Suggested time: 5 minutes)

- Check for careless spelling errors.
- Watch for left-out words and punctuation.
- Make sure you've included a title.

Tips for Taking a Timed Writing Test – Narrative

(short story, autobiography)



1. Carefully read the prompt. (Suggested time: 2 minutes)

- What are you being asked to do?
- Who is your audience supposed to be?
- Have you been given a specific length?
- What are you supposed to include?

2. Brainstorm ideas for your story. (Suggested time: 3 minutes)

- Write down as many ideas as you can think of.
- Look them over.
- Decide which one will be the easiest to develop into a story.

3. Plan the story. (Suggested time: 15 minutes)

- Create a conflict. What problem will the character face?
- Set the scene.
- Create a plot chart to organize the sequence of events in your story including the climax and resolution.

4. Write the story. (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

- Follow your plan.
- Start strong with dialogue, action, or the character's thoughts.
- Include dialogue and descriptive details. Show—don't tell.
- Think as you write.
- This is where you will spend most of your time. Give it your best effort!

5. Reread and edit one last time. (Suggested time: 5 minutes)

- Check for careless spelling errors.
- Watch for left-out words and punctuation.
- Make sure you've included a title.