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.