

# 5th Grade Writing Samples

미국 5학년 라이팅 샘플 가이드

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*Based on the New York State Grades 4–5 Writing Evaluation Rubric*

CCLS W.2 · R.1–9 · L.1–3 · L.6

 Informational  Argumentative  Narrative

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Each prompt includes: Sample A (Below ~ On Grade Level) + Sample B (Advanced / AAP / GT / Honors) + Rubric Scores + Strengths & Areas for Growth

각 프롬프트 구성: Sample A (기본~평균 수준) + Sample B (심화/영재반 수준) + 루브릭 점수 + 강점 & 개선점 코멘트

## About This Guide

This guide was created to help Korean-American families understand what strong writing looks like at the 5th-grade level during the second semester of the school year. The sample essays in this guide are not written by actual students — they were carefully crafted to reflect the New York State ELA Writing Rubric, which evaluates student writing across four categories: Content & Analysis, Command of Evidence, Coherence & Organization, and Control of Conventions.

이 가이드는 한인 가정의 부모님들이 5학년 2학기 수준의 좋은 글쓰기가 어떤 모습인지 이해하실 수 있도록 만들었습니다. 이 가이드의 예시 글은 실제 학생이 쓴 것이 아니라, 뉴욕 주 **ELA** 라이팅 루브릭을 기준으로 직접 작성한 샘플입니다. 이 루브릭은 *Content & Analysis*, *Command of Evidence*, *Coherence & Organization*, *Control of Conventions* 네 가지 영역으로 학생 글쓰기를 평가합니다.

## What's Inside

This guide includes 10 writing prompts across three genres: Informational (4 prompts), Argumentative (4 prompts), and Narrative (2 prompts). For each prompt, you will find two sample essays:

**Sample A — Below ~ On Grade Level: Developing writer, not yet mastered grade-level expectations. Scores typically fall in the 2–3 range.**

**Sample B — Advanced (AAP · GT · Honors): Scores consistently reach 3–4, featuring sophisticated vocabulary, specific evidence, and nuanced analysis.**

이 가이드에는 세 가지 장르에 걸쳐 총 10개의 라이팅 프롬프트가 포함되어 있습니다. 각 프롬프트마다 두 가지 샘플을 제공합니다. **Sample A**는 기본~평균 수준, **Sample B**는 영재반·AAP·Honors 수업을 듣는 학생 수준입니다.

## How to Use This Guide

This guide is not designed for students to memorize. It is designed for parents to develop an eye for what strong writing looks like — so that when your child brings home an essay, you can ask targeted, meaningful questions. Try asking:

*"What hook did you use to start your essay?"*

*"Can you show me where your evidence is — and does it support your claim?"*

*"Does your conclusion do more than just repeat your introduction?"*

이 자료는 아이들에게 달달 외우게 하려고 만든 것이 아닙니다. 부모님이 좋은 글쓰기가 어떤 모습인지 눈으로 익히실 수 있도록 만든 자료입니다. 아이가 에세이를 써 올 때, 루브릭 점수와 강점/개선점 코멘트를 참고해서 왜 한 샘플이 더 높은 점수를 받는지 이해하세요.

## NYS Rubric Reference · 루브릭 참고표

| Score    | Content & Analysis                                                              | Command of Evidence                                                                       | Coherence, Org & Style                                                                     | Control of Conventions                                                           |
|----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>4</b> | Insightful analysis; deep comprehension<br>깊이 있는 분석; 텍스트에 대한 심층적 이해             | Well-chosen facts, quotations, sustained varied evidence<br>신중하게 선택된 사실·인용문; 다양하고 지속적인 근거 | Clear, purposeful org; precise, domain-specific vocabulary<br>명확하고 목적 있는 구성; 정밀하고 전문적인 어휘  | Few errors; demonstrates strong command<br>오류가 거의 없음; 높은 수준의 문법 구사력              |
| <b>3</b> | Logically introduced; grade-appropriate comprehension<br>논리적인 서론; 학년 수준에 맞는 이해력 | Relevant facts, definitions, details, examples<br>관련 사실·정의·세부 내용·예시 포함                    | Clear org; grade-appropriate words; concluding statement<br>명확한 구성; 학년 수준의 어휘; 마무리 문장 포함   | Occasional errors that don't hinder comprehension<br>간헐적 오류 있으나 이해를 방해하지 않음      |
| <b>2</b> | Generally follows task; literal comprehension<br>과제를 대체로 따름; 표면적 이해 수준          | Partial development; some irrelevant evidence<br>부분적 전개; 일부 관련 없는 근거 포함                   | Some org attempt; inconsistent linking; limited conclusion<br>구성 시도 있으나 연결이 일관되지 않음; 결론 미흡 | Emerging command; some errors hinder comprehension<br>문법 능력 발전 중; 이해를 방해하는 오류 일부 |
| <b>1</b> | Doesn't follow logically; little understanding<br>논리적 연결 부족; 텍스트 이해도 낮음         | Attempts evidence; minimal or invalid support<br>근거 시도 있으나 최소한이거나 부적절함                    | Little organization; lacks linking; illogical conclusion<br>구성 거의 없음; 연결어 부족; 결론 비논리적      | Frequent errors; lack of command<br>잦은 오류; 문법 구사력 부족                             |

\* Color coding: Green = 4 · Blue = 3 · Yellow = 2 · Red = 1

**Prompt 1** · Informational

**Explain how the water cycle works and why it is important to life on Earth.**

물의 순환이 어떻게 작동하는지, 그리고 지구의 생명체에게 왜 중요한지 설명하시오.

**Sample A · Below ~ On Grade Level**

The water cycle is a process that moves water around the Earth. It has three main steps: evaporation, condensation, and precipitation. These steps repeat over and over again.

First, the sun heats up water in oceans, lakes, and rivers. The water turns into water vapor and goes up into the air. This is called evaporation. Next, the water vapor gets cold when it goes higher in the sky. It turns back into tiny water drops that make clouds. This is called condensation. Then the water falls back down as rain or snow. This is called precipitation.

After it rains, some water goes into rivers and lakes. Some goes into the ground. Then the sun heats it up again and the cycle starts over.

The water cycle is important because it gives us fresh water to drink. Plants and animals also need water to live. Without the water cycle, there would be no water on land and everything would die.

In conclusion, the water cycle is a very important process that keeps water moving around Earth. It helps all living things get the water they need to survive.

**Rubric Score** · 루브릭 점수   Content & Analysis **2/4** · Command of Evidence **2/4** · Coherence & Style **2/4** · Conventions **3/4**

✓ **Strengths**

- Clearly identifies the three main stages (evaporation, condensation, precipitation) in the correct order
- Provides a basic explanation of why the water cycle matters to living things
- Uses appropriate transition words (First, Next, Then) to organize steps

▲ **Areas for Growth**

- Explanation remains surface-level — lacks specific details (e.g., how solar energy powers evaporation, where precipitation collects)
- Evidence is limited to general statements; no facts, data, or domain-specific vocabulary (e.g., transpiration, runoff, groundwater)
- Conclusion simply restates the introduction without offering a broader insight

## Sample B · Advanced ( AAP · GT · Honors )

Imagine a single raindrop landing on a mountain peak in the Himalayas — that same water molecule may have once flowed through the Amazon River, evaporated over the Pacific Ocean, and drifted as a cloud for thousands of miles before falling again. This remarkable journey is the water cycle, or hydrological cycle, one of Earth's most essential natural processes.

The water cycle operates through four interconnected stages. Solar energy drives evaporation, transforming liquid water from Earth's surface into invisible water vapor. Plants contribute through a parallel process called transpiration, releasing moisture from their leaves into the atmosphere. As this vapor rises to cooler altitudes, condensation occurs, forming the clouds we observe daily. When cloud droplets become too heavy to stay suspended, precipitation returns water to Earth as rain, snow, sleet, or hail — determined largely by atmospheric temperature. Finally, through collection and runoff, water gathers in rivers, lakes, aquifers, and the ocean, where evaporation restarts the cycle.

Beyond moving water, the hydrological cycle regulates Earth's temperature. Coastal regions experience milder climates because large water bodies absorb and slowly release heat. Evaporation also acts as a natural purification system: as water vaporizes, dissolved salts and pollutants are left behind, making precipitation a primary source of freshwater for billions of people.

However, climate scientists are increasingly concerned that rising global temperatures are intensifying the cycle. Accelerated evaporation leads to more severe droughts in some regions while producing more powerful storms and flooding in others. In fact, NASA data shows that the water cycle has sped up by approximately seven percent for every degree Celsius of warming.

Understanding the water cycle is far more than an academic exercise. It is foundational knowledge for addressing water scarcity, predicting extreme weather, and protecting the ecosystems that all life depends on. The drop of rain that nourishes a field of wheat today was once the ocean — and will be again.

**Rubric Score** · 루브릭 점수   Content & Analysis **4/4** · Command of Evidence **4/4** · Coherence & Style **4/4** · Conventions **4/4**

### ✓ Strengths

- Opens with a vivid, concrete image (raindrop from Himalayas to Amazon) that immediately draws the reader in
- Incorporates domain-specific vocabulary (transpiration, evaporation, aquifers, hydrological cycle) accurately and naturally
- Supports claims with specific evidence (NASA data, climate science) and explains the 'so what' at every step
- Strong concluding sentence creates a full-circle connection back to the opening image

### ▲ Areas for Growth

- Could briefly address human interventions (dams, irrigation) that disrupt natural water cycles for an even fuller analysis
- Minor opportunity to vary sentence length more deliberately for stylistic effect

## Prompt 2 · Informational

### Describe the causes and effects of deforestation on the environment.

삼림 벌채의 원인과 환경에 미치는 영향을 설명하십시오.

#### Sample A · Below ~ On Grade Level

Deforestation means cutting down a lot of trees. It happens all over the world, especially in rainforests. There are many reasons why people cut down trees, and it causes many problems for the environment.

One cause of deforestation is farming. Farmers cut down trees so they can have more land to grow food. Another cause is logging. Companies cut trees to sell the wood to make furniture and paper. Sometimes people also burn forests to clear the land.

Deforestation has many bad effects. When trees are cut down, animals lose their homes. Many animals become endangered or even go extinct. Deforestation also causes climate change because trees absorb carbon dioxide. Without trees, more carbon dioxide stays in the air and makes Earth warmer.

Another effect is soil erosion. When trees are gone, the dirt washes away when it rains. This makes it hard to grow crops later.

In conclusion, deforestation is a serious problem caused by farming and logging. It harms animals, makes climate change worse, and damages the soil. We should try to plant more trees and use less paper to help protect forests.

**Rubric Score** · 루브릭 점수   Content & Analysis **2/4** · Command of Evidence **2/4** · Coherence & Style **3/4** · Conventions **3/4**

#### ✓ Strengths

- Clearly organized around causes and effects — a strong match for the informational task
- Identifies multiple relevant causes (farming, logging, burning) and effects (habitat loss, climate change, soil erosion)
- Maintains a logical flow with consistent paragraph structure

#### ▲ Areas for Growth

- Lacks specific evidence — no statistics, locations, or named examples (e.g., Amazon, Borneo) to support claims
- Analysis is limited to naming effects without explaining the mechanism (e.g., why does losing trees worsen the carbon cycle?)
- Vocabulary remains general ('bad effects,' 'serious problem') — domain-specific terms like biodiversity, carbon sequestration, ecosystem would strengthen the piece

## Sample B · Advanced ( AAP · GT · Honors )

Every second, an area of rainforest the size of a football field is destroyed. According to the World Wildlife Fund, the world has already lost more than half of its forests, with tropical regions like the Amazon Basin and Borneo's rainforests disappearing at alarming rates. Deforestation — the large-scale clearing of trees by humans — is driven by complex economic forces and carries profound consequences for the planet's ecosystems.

The primary causes of deforestation are agricultural expansion, commercial logging, and infrastructure development. In Brazil, cattle ranching and soybean farming account for roughly 80 percent of cleared Amazonian land. Logging companies harvest hardwoods like mahogany and teak for export, while governments build roads and dams through previously inaccessible forest regions, opening them to further settlement and exploitation.

The environmental effects are both immediate and long-reaching. Forests are Earth's most biodiverse ecosystems — the Amazon alone houses an estimated ten percent of all species on the planet. When habitats are destroyed, species lose the food sources and shelter they need to survive; the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) links deforestation to accelerating extinction rates. Additionally, trees serve as critical carbon sinks, absorbing CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere through photosynthesis. When forests are cleared and burned, that stored carbon is released, making deforestation responsible for approximately 10 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions.

Deforestation also disrupts local water cycles. Tree roots anchor soil and enable groundwater absorption; without them, heavy rains trigger erosion and landslides, reducing soil fertility and increasing flood risk downstream. In the Amazon, scientists warn of a 'tipping point' beyond which the forest can no longer regenerate enough moisture to sustain itself, potentially transforming a rainforest into a dry savanna.

Protecting the world's remaining forests is not merely an environmental cause — it is an economic and humanitarian necessity. Indigenous communities who depend on forests for food, medicine, and culture are among the first to suffer from deforestation. Sustainable forestry certifications, international carbon credit programs, and consumer awareness are all tools in reversing this crisis. The fate of the forest, ultimately, is inseparable from the fate of the climate itself.

**Rubric Score** · 루브릭 점수   Content & Analysis **4/4** · Command of Evidence **4/4** · Coherence & Style **4/4** · Conventions **4/4**

### ✓ Strengths

- Opens with a striking statistic that immediately establishes the scale of the issue
- Integrates credible sources (WWF, IUCN, NASA data equivalent) naturally within the text
- Explains mechanisms, not just facts — e.g., how deforestation disrupts the water cycle and creates a tipping point
- Conclusion extends the analysis to human and policy dimensions, showing sophisticated thinking beyond the prompt

### ▲ Areas for Growth

- Could address reforestation efforts or success stories to present a more complete picture
- A topic sentence for each body paragraph could be made even more precise to sharpen the argument



## Prompt 3 · Informational

**Explain what the three branches of the U.S. government do and why they are important.**

미국 정부의 세 가지 기관이 하는 일과 그 중요성을 설명하십시오.

### Sample A · Below ~ On Grade Level

The United States government has three branches: the legislative branch, the executive branch, and the judicial branch. Each branch has different jobs and they are all important.

The legislative branch is called Congress. It is made up of the Senate and the House of Representatives. Congress makes the laws for the country. There are 100 senators and 435 representatives.

The executive branch is led by the President. The President's job is to make sure the laws are followed. The President is also in charge of the military and can talk to leaders of other countries. The Vice President also helps.

The judicial branch is made up of courts. The highest court is the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court decides if laws follow the Constitution. There are nine judges called justices on the Supreme Court.

These three branches are important because they work together. If one branch makes a mistake, another branch can fix it. This is called checks and balances. The Founding Fathers created this system so that no one person would have too much power. This is why the three branches are so important to the United States.

**Rubric Score** · 루브릭 점수 Content & Analysis **2/4** · Command of Evidence **3/4** · Coherence & Style **3/4** · Conventions **3/4**

#### ✓ Strengths

- Accurately identifies all three branches and provides factual details (100 senators, 9 Supreme Court justices)
- Introduces the concept of checks and balances in the conclusion
- Organized logically, with each branch covered in its own paragraph

#### ▲ Areas for Growth

- Explanation of checks and balances is only one sentence — needs specific examples (e.g., presidential veto, judicial review)
- Content stays at the level of naming facts rather than analyzing significance; why does the separation of powers protect citizens?
- Missing a true hook — the introduction dives directly into a list without engaging the reader

## Sample B · Advanced ( AAP · GT · Honors )

In 1787, the framers of the U.S. Constitution faced a daunting challenge: how do you build a government powerful enough to govern a nation, yet restrained enough to protect individual freedoms? Their solution — dividing authority among three independent branches — remains one of the most influential designs in political history.

The legislative branch, known as Congress, holds the power to make federal law. Bicameral in structure, Congress consists of the Senate (100 members, two per state) and the House of Representatives (435 members, apportioned by population). This dual structure was itself a compromise, balancing the interests of large and small states. Congress also controls the federal budget, approves presidential appointments, and, in rare circumstances, can remove the President through impeachment.

The executive branch, led by the President, is responsible for implementing and enforcing the laws Congress passes. As Commander in Chief, the President directs the military and conducts foreign policy. However, presidential power is not absolute: Congress must ratify treaties and declare war, while the judicial branch can rule presidential actions unconstitutional. For example, in *Youngstown Sheet & Tube Co. v. Sawyer* (1952), the Supreme Court ruled that President Truman had exceeded his authority by seizing steel mills during the Korean War.

The judicial branch, headed by the Supreme Court's nine Justices, interprets whether laws align with the Constitution. Through a power called judicial review — established in the landmark case *Marbury v. Madison* (1803) — the Court can strike down laws passed by Congress or actions taken by the President. This authority makes the judiciary the ultimate guardian of constitutional rights.

What makes this system remarkable is not any single branch, but the deliberate friction between them. Known as 'checks and balances,' each branch holds specific powers to limit the others, preventing any single branch — or individual — from accumulating unchecked authority. In an era of increasing political polarization, the enduring strength of this framework is a testament to the foresight of those who designed it.

**Rubric Score** · 루브릭 점수   Content & Analysis **4/4** · Command of Evidence **4/4** · Coherence & Style **4/4** · Conventions **4/4**

### ✓ Strengths

- Opens with a compelling historical question that immediately establishes the 'why' behind the topic
- References specific landmark cases (*Marbury v. Madison*, *Youngstown*) to provide concrete, credible evidence
- Explains mechanisms at a sophisticated level — e.g., why bicameralism was a political compromise
- Conclusion synthesizes information into a broader insight about democratic governance today

### ▲ Areas for Growth

- Brief mention of impeachment could be expanded with a historical example to add depth
- Transition between the executive and judicial paragraphs could be smoother

## Prompt 4 · Informational

### Explain the causes and long-term effects of World War II.

제2차 세계대전의 원인과 장기적인 영향을 설명하시오.

#### Sample A · Below ~ On Grade Level

World War II was one of the biggest wars in history. It lasted from 1939 to 1945 and involved countries from all over the world. There were many reasons why the war started, and it had many effects that lasted for a long time.

One cause of World War II was Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party. Hitler wanted to take over Europe and he invaded many countries. Another cause was Japan attacking Pearl Harbor in 1941, which made the United States join the war. The war in Europe and Asia was very big and many countries were fighting.

World War II had many long-term effects. Millions of people died during the war, including six million Jewish people in the Holocaust. After the war, Germany was divided into two parts. Japan got two atomic bombs dropped on it by the United States.

The United Nations was created after the war to help countries solve problems peacefully. Countries also worked together to rebuild Europe with a plan called the Marshall Plan.

World War II was a very important event in history. It changed the world a lot and led to new organizations and new ways countries work together. We should remember what happened so that it never happens again.

**Rubric Score** · 루브릭 점수 Content & Analysis **2/4** · Command of Evidence **2/4** · Coherence & Style **2/4** · Conventions **3/4**

#### ✓ Strengths

- Identifies key events (Hitler's invasions, Pearl Harbor, Holocaust, atomic bombs) showing familiarity with the topic
- Mentions long-term outcomes like the United Nations and Marshall Plan
- Attempts to address both causes and effects as the prompt requires

#### ▲ Areas for Growth

- Causes are limited to Hitler and Pearl Harbor — deeper causes (Treaty of Versailles, Great Depression, appeasement) are missing
- Events are listed rather than explained; the connection between causes and their consequences is not developed
- The conclusion is a generic moral statement, not an analytical summary of the war's significance

**Sample B · Advanced ( AAP · GT · Honors )**

The seeds of World War II were planted not in Berlin or Tokyo, but in the peace treaty that ended World War I. The Treaty of Versailles (1919) imposed crippling reparations and territorial losses on Germany, generating widespread humiliation and economic devastation that the Great Depression of the 1930s only intensified. In this environment of desperation, extremist ideologies flourished. Adolf Hitler's Nazi Party rose to power in 1933 promising national restoration, while militarist governments in Japan and fascist leadership under Mussolini in Italy harbored expansionist ambitions of their own. When European powers pursued a policy of appeasement — tolerating Hitler's early aggressions to avoid conflict — they inadvertently emboldened him. Germany's invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939, finally forced Britain and France to declare war.

The six-year conflict that followed became the deadliest in human history, killing an estimated 70–85 million people — more than three percent of the entire world population. The Holocaust, the systematic genocide of six million Jews and millions of others, represented an industrialized scale of atrocity that permanently reshaped international law and ethics. Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941 drew the United States into the Pacific theater, transforming a European war into a genuinely global one.

The long-term effects of World War II fundamentally reorganized the global order. The United States and Soviet Union emerged as rival superpowers, dividing Europe between democratic and communist spheres of influence in what became known as the Cold War — a geopolitical tension that would define international relations for the next five decades. A devastated Europe rebuilt with American aid through the Marshall Plan, laying the economic foundation for what would eventually become the European Union.

Internationally, the war's horrors drove the creation of the United Nations in 1945, designed to prevent future conflicts through diplomacy. The Nuremberg Trials established the precedent that government leaders could be held criminally accountable for war crimes and crimes against humanity. Meanwhile, the detonation of atomic bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki inaugurated the nuclear age, introducing a new existential dimension to international security.

Perhaps most enduringly, World War II accelerated the dismantling of European colonial empires. Nations like India, Indonesia, and Vietnam, having witnessed the vulnerability and moral contradictions of colonial powers, intensified independence movements in the postwar years. The war did not merely end an era — it gave birth to the modern world.

**Rubric Score** · 루브릭 점수   Content & Analysis **4/4** · Command of Evidence **4/4** · Coherence & Style **4/4** · Conventions **4/4**

✓ **Strengths**

- Opens with the Treaty of Versailles — correctly tracing causes beyond the surface level — demonstrating deep historical analysis
- Uses precise historical vocabulary: appeasement, Marshall Plan, Nuremberg Trials, Cold War, decolonization
- Connects events causally rather than listing them chronologically, showing sophisticated understanding
- Closing paragraph extends analysis to colonialism and the modern world — exceptional scope for a 5th-grade essay

▲ **Areas for Growth**

- The Pacific theater (China, the Philippines, Korea) could receive more explicit coverage alongside European events
- A transition sentence between paragraphs 3 and 4 would improve cohesion slightly

## Prompt 5 · Argumentative

**Should students have homework every night? Support your position with reasons and evidence.**

학생들이 매일 밤 숙제를 해야 할까요? 근거와 증거로 자신의 입장을 뒷받침하십시오.

### Sample A · Below ~ On Grade Level

I think students should not have homework every night. Homework takes a lot of time and makes students stressed. Students need time to rest and spend time with their families.

First, homework is very stressful. After school, students are already tired. When they have to do homework, they get even more tired. This is not good for their health.

Second, students need free time. Free time is important because students can play sports, do hobbies, and spend time with friends. These things are also important for learning.

Some people think homework helps students learn. But I think students can learn enough during school time if teachers use the time well.

In conclusion, students should not have homework every night because it is stressful and takes away their free time. Schools should only give homework when it is really needed.

**Rubric Score** · 루브릭 점수   Content & Analysis **2/4** · Command of Evidence **2/4** · Coherence & Style **2/4** · Conventions **3/4**

#### ✓ Strengths

- Clearly states a position in the introduction and maintains it consistently
- Acknowledges the opposing view (homework helps learning) in paragraph 4, which is a positive argumentative move
- Uses transitional words (First, Second) to signal organization

#### ▲ Areas for Growth

- Claims are based entirely on personal opinion with no supporting evidence (studies, statistics, expert quotes)
- The counterargument is dismissed in one sentence without being effectively addressed or refuted
- Vocabulary is limited and informal ('very stressful,' 'really needed') — academic language would strengthen credibility

## Sample B · Advanced ( AAP · GT · Honors )

Backpacks full of worksheets. Late-night anxiety. Exhausted students dragging themselves to school the next morning. For millions of students, homework is a nightly reality — but does it actually improve learning? A growing body of research suggests that excessive homework, particularly in elementary and middle school, may do more harm than good.

Homework advocates argue that it reinforces classroom learning, builds study habits, and prepares students for academic demands ahead. These are legitimate goals. However, the critical question is not whether homework can be beneficial, but whether nightly homework is the most effective way to achieve those goals — and for whom.

Harris Cooper, a leading researcher at Duke University who conducted a comprehensive meta-analysis of homework studies, found that while homework shows a positive correlation with achievement in high school, the effect is far weaker in middle school and negligible for elementary students. His famous 'ten-minute rule' — ten minutes of homework per grade level per night — suggests that most schools far exceed optimal homework loads. A fifth grader, by that standard, should have no more than 50 minutes of nightly homework; many schools assign far more.

Beyond academic outcomes, excessive homework has measurable mental health consequences. A Stanford University study found that high-achieving students who spend more than three hours a night on homework report significantly higher levels of stress, physical health problems, and lack of sleep. Chronic sleep deprivation, in turn, impairs the very cognitive functions — memory consolidation and focus — that homework is meant to strengthen.

The solution is not to eliminate homework entirely, but to make it purposeful. High-quality, targeted practice — reading for 20 minutes, reviewing math concepts before a test — serves real academic purposes. Rote worksheets that students rush through while exhausted do not. Schools should evaluate homework not by volume but by impact. Students who arrive at school rested, curious, and ready to engage will learn far more than students who arrive depleted from a night of mandatory busywork.

**Rubric Score** · 루브릭 점수   Content & Analysis **4/4** · Command of Evidence **4/4** · Coherence & Style **4/4** · Conventions **4/4**

### ✓ Strengths

- Opens with a vivid, sensory-based hook that immediately draws the reader in without stating a claim too early
- Acknowledges the opposing view fairly before dismantling it — a hallmark of mature argumentation
- Cites specific research (Harris Cooper's meta-analysis, Stanford study) with enough detail to be credible
- Conclusion offers a nuanced solution rather than a simplistic reversal of the opposing position

### ▲ Areas for Growth

- Could briefly address socioeconomic equity concerns — students without quiet study space or parental support are disproportionately disadvantaged by heavy homework loads
- The opening paragraph, while strong, could be slightly more explicit about the essay's direction

## Prompt 6 · Argumentative

### Should animals be kept in zoos?

동물을 동물원에 가두는 것이 옳은가요?

#### Sample A · Below ~ On Grade Level

I think animals should not be kept in zoos. Animals belong in the wild where they can be free. Zoos are like prisons for animals and they make animals sad.

First, animals in zoos are not happy. They live in small spaces and cannot run around like they would in the wild. Lions need a lot of space to run, but in zoos they are stuck in small cages.

Second, zoos are not natural for animals. Wild animals are used to living in the forest or jungle. When they are put in zoos, they get stressed and act differently. This is called zoochosis.

Some people say zoos help save endangered animals. But there are other ways to help animals without putting them in zoos. We can protect their habitats instead.

In conclusion, animals should not be kept in zoos because it makes them unhappy and is not natural for them. We should protect animal habitats instead.

**Rubric Score** · 루브릭 점수 · Content & Analysis **2/4** · Command of Evidence **2/4** · Coherence & Style **3/4** · Conventions **3/4**

#### ✓ Strengths

- Uses domain-specific vocabulary (zoochosis) showing some content knowledge
- Addresses the counterargument about conservation and offers an alternative
- Maintains a consistent position with a clear concluding statement

#### ▲ Areas for Growth

- Claims about animal unhappiness are asserted, not evidenced — behavioral science data or documented examples would strengthen the argument
- The alternative ('protect habitats') is mentioned but not explained or supported
- Counterargument is dismissed too quickly without engaging with specific zoo conservation programs

## Sample B · Advanced ( AAP · GT · Honors )

When the last male northern white rhinoceros, named Sudan, died at the Ol Pejeta Conservancy in Kenya in 2018, it marked the effective extinction of his subspecies in the wild. For conservationists, this loss was devastating — but it also renewed a crucial debate: can zoos, with their captive breeding programs and public education missions, justify the confinement they impose on wild animals?

The case against zoos is rooted in animal welfare. Studies of captive animals consistently document behaviors absent in wild populations: repetitive pacing, swaying, and self-directed aggression — symptoms collectively known as stereotypy, the result of profound psychological stress. In a 2004 study published in *Nature*, researchers found that elephants in captivity live significantly shorter lives than their wild counterparts. For species with large ranges — elephants, polar bears, big cats — even the largest zoo enclosures are a fraction of the territory they would naturally inhabit.

Proponents of zoos point to their role in conservation. The Arabian oryx, California condor, and black-footed ferret were all saved from extinction through captive breeding programs. Accredited facilities like those certified by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) redirect significant resources to field conservation, habitat protection, and wildlife research. For urban populations with little connection to the natural world, zoos serve as a rare point of contact with wildlife, potentially cultivating conservation values in the next generation.

Yet these benefits must be weighed honestly. Of the roughly 800,000 animals held in zoos worldwide, only a small fraction belong to endangered species with active reintroduction programs. Many animals in zoos will never be released — they serve primarily as entertainment. The question is whether the genuine conservation achieved by the best zoos outweighs the harm done to the majority of captive animals who will never see the wild.

A more ethical model may be the accredited sanctuary — facilities that prioritize animal welfare over public exhibition, provide spacious naturalistic environments, and take in animals that cannot survive in the wild without breeding them for display. Rather than eliminating zoos entirely, the goal should be transforming them: raising welfare standards, ending the exhibition of species unsuited to captivity, and redirecting funding toward wild habitat preservation. The rhinoceros may be beyond saving — but the choices we make now will determine what else we lose.

**Rubric Score** · 루브릭 점수   Content & Analysis **4/4** · Command of Evidence **4/4** · Coherence & Style **4/4** · Conventions **4/4**

### ✓ Strengths

- Opens with a powerful, specific real-world example (Sudan the last male northern white rhino) that immediately grounds the debate
- Presents both sides with genuine fairness before arriving at a nuanced, evidence-based position
- References specific studies (*Nature*, 2004), organizations (AZA), and examples (California condor) that demonstrate research depth
- Proposes a sophisticated alternative (accredited sanctuaries) rather than a simplistic yes/no conclusion

### ▲ Areas for Growth

- Could briefly address the economic dimension — zoos as revenue-generating institutions whose incentives may conflict with conservation goals



## Prompt 7 · Argumentative

### Is social media more harmful than helpful for kids your age?

소셜 미디어는 여러분 또래의 아이들에게 도움보다 해가 더 많은가요?

#### Sample A · Below ~ On Grade Level

I think social media is more harmful than helpful for kids my age. There are many problems with social media like cyberbullying and wasting time.

First, social media causes cyberbullying. A lot of kids get mean messages from other kids online. This makes them feel sad and can hurt their self-esteem. Cyberbullying is a very big problem in schools today.

Second, social media wastes time. Kids spend too much time on their phones instead of doing homework or playing outside. This is not good for them.

Third, social media shows fake things. People post pictures that are not real and kids think they need to look like that. This makes kids feel bad about how they look.

Some people say social media helps kids stay connected with friends and family. But I think you can talk to your friends in real life instead.

In conclusion, social media is more harmful than helpful because of cyberbullying, wasting time, and fake images. Kids should use social media less and spend more time in real life.

**Rubric Score** · 루브릭 점수 · Content & Analysis **2/4** · Command of Evidence **2/4** · Coherence & Style **3/4** · Conventions **3/4**

#### ✓ Strengths

- Identifies three distinct reasons (cyberbullying, time-wasting, unrealistic images), showing organized thinking
- Acknowledges the counterargument about staying connected
- Clear introduction and conclusion with a consistent position

#### ▲ Areas for Growth

- None of the three claims are supported by evidence, data, or specific examples
- The counterargument is dismissed without engagement — 'you can talk in real life' doesn't address the genuine value of digital connection
- Analysis stays at the level of naming problems without examining why they harm cognitive development or mental health specifically

## Sample B · Advanced ( AAP · GT · Honors )

Every time a notification appears, the brain releases a small burst of dopamine — the same neurotransmitter activated by food, exercise, and social approval. Social media platforms are deliberately engineered to exploit this biological reward system, keeping users scrolling, liking, and posting. For adults with fully developed frontal lobes, this is a challenge. For children and adolescents whose brains are still forming, it may be a crisis.

Research linking social media use to adolescent mental health challenges is substantial and growing. A landmark 2019 study by the Royal Society for Public Health in the UK ranked Instagram as the most harmful social media platform for young people's mental health, correlating heavy use with increased rates of anxiety, depression, body image dissatisfaction, and poor sleep. The American Psychological Association has identified social comparison — seeing idealized, curated versions of peers' lives — as a primary mechanism through which platforms harm self-esteem, particularly among girls.

Defenders of social media correctly note that these platforms enable community-building, creative expression, and access to information and support networks that might not exist locally. For LGBTQ+ youth in unsupportive environments, or students with rare interests and disabilities, online communities can be profoundly meaningful. During the COVID-19 pandemic, social media was often the only means of social connection available to young people.

However, a crucial distinction must be made between passive and active use. Research consistently shows that passive consumption — scrolling feeds and watching others without interacting — is most strongly associated with negative outcomes. Active use — creating content, messaging specific friends, joining interest-based communities — shows far weaker negative effects and sometimes positive ones. The problem, then, is not social media itself, but how most young people actually use it.

Given that social media is unlikely to disappear, the most responsible approach is not prohibition but education. Schools and parents should focus on developing digital literacy — helping children recognize algorithmic manipulation, evaluate the authenticity of curated content, and set intentional limits on passive scrolling. Social media is a tool. Like all tools, its impact depends entirely on the knowledge and intentions of the person using it — and children deserve to be taught how to use it wisely.

**Rubric Score** · 루브릭 점수   Content & Analysis **4/4** · Command of Evidence **4/4** · Coherence & Style **4/4** · Conventions **4/4**

### ✓ Strengths

- Opens with a compelling explanation of dopamine and neurological design — an unexpected and sophisticated entry point for a 5th-grade essay
- References specific research (Royal Society for Public Health, APA, COVID-19 context) with precision
- Makes a nuanced distinction between passive and active social media use — far more sophisticated than a simple 'social media is bad' argument
- Conclusion argues for digital literacy rather than prohibition, demonstrating genuine critical thinking about a complex issue

### ▲ Areas for Growth

- Could mention specific age limits or policy recommendations (e.g., the UK's Online Safety Act) to strengthen the practical dimension

## Prompt 8 · Argumentative

### Should schools require students to wear uniforms?

학교는 학생들에게 교복 착용을 의무화해야 할까요?

#### Sample A · Below ~ On Grade Level

I think schools should require students to wear uniforms. Uniforms are fair for everyone and help students focus on school instead of clothes.

First, uniforms make things fair. When everyone wears the same clothes, rich and poor students look the same. This means that students do not get made fun of for wearing old or cheap clothes.

Second, uniforms help students focus. When students wear uniforms, they do not think about fashion or what to wear. They can focus on learning instead.

Some people say uniforms take away freedom of expression. But students can still show who they are through their personality and how they act.

In conclusion, schools should require uniforms because they are fair and help students focus. Uniforms make schools a better place to learn.

**Rubric Score** · 루브릭 점수 · Content & Analysis **2/4** · Command of Evidence **2/4** · Coherence & Style **3/4** · Conventions **3/4**

#### ✓ Strengths

- Clear thesis with two organized supporting reasons
- Addresses the self-expression counterargument with a brief response
- Logical cause-and-effect reasoning (uniforms → reduced judgment about clothing)

#### ▲ Areas for Growth

- No evidence or data is provided — the arguments remain entirely assertion-based
- The counterargument about self-expression is quickly dismissed rather than thoughtfully engaged
- Missing analysis of potential downsides (cost of uniforms, enforcement challenges) that would show balanced thinking

## Sample B · Advanced ( AAP · GT · Honors )

In September 1994, Long Beach Unified School District in California became the first public school district in the United States to mandate uniforms for all K–8 students. Within a year, the district reported a 36 percent decrease in overall crime, a 51 percent drop in physical fights, and improved attendance. While researchers debate how much of this improvement is attributable to uniforms specifically, the Long Beach experiment helped launch a national conversation about whether what students wear affects how they learn.

Proponents of school uniforms make several compelling arguments. Studies suggest that uniforms can reduce socioeconomic-based bullying by diminishing visible markers of wealth disparity. When students are not competing over brand-name clothing, peer hierarchies based on fashion become less pronounced. Additionally, surveys of students in uniform-requiring schools frequently report that uniforms simplify morning routines and reduce social anxiety around appearance — psychological bandwidth that can be redirected toward academics.

The argument against uniforms, however, deserves serious consideration. Developmental psychologists emphasize that adolescence is a critical period for identity formation, and personal expression through clothing is a meaningful part of that process. Requiring students to wear identical attire may suppress individuality in ways that have downstream effects on creativity and self-confidence. Furthermore, school uniform policies must account for cultural and religious dress — and navigating these accommodations can create their own forms of inequity.

There is also the economic argument. While uniforms seem economical, their benefit depends entirely on whether they replace a wider, more expensive wardrobe — which, for lower-income families who already shop inexpensively, may not be the case. Poorly administered uniform programs can actually impose new costs on the families they intend to help.

The evidence suggests that uniforms, when thoughtfully implemented and paired with strong school culture initiatives, can contribute positively to school climate. But uniforms alone are not a solution — they are one tool among many for creating environments where all students feel safe, respected, and ready to learn. Whether they are the right tool for a given school depends less on a universal rule than on the specific needs and values of the community they serve.

**Rubric Score** · 루브릭 점수   Content & Analysis **4/4** · Command of Evidence **4/4** · Coherence & Style **4/4** · Conventions **4/4**

### ✓ Strengths

- Opens with a specific, data-backed historical example (Long Beach USD, 1994) that immediately establishes credibility
- Engages seriously with both sides — the counterarguments about identity formation and cost are treated with equal rigor
- Conclusion is appropriately nuanced, resisting the urge to declare a definitive winner and instead emphasizing context-dependency
- Demonstrates understanding of broader institutional and socioeconomic dimensions beyond the surface-level debate

### ▲ Areas for Growth

- Could cite a specific study on academic outcomes (e.g., University of Houston 2010 analysis) to strengthen the research base

## Prompt 9 · Narrative

**Write about a time you faced a challenge and what you learned from it.**

도전에 직면했던 경험과 그로부터 배운 것을 써보시오.

### Sample A · Below ~ On Grade Level

One time I faced a big challenge when I had to do a presentation in front of my whole class. I was very nervous because I did not like speaking in front of people.

A few weeks before the presentation, my teacher said we had to do a project about our favorite animal. I chose dolphins. I worked hard on my poster and practiced my speech at home many times.

On the day of the presentation, I was really scared. My heart was beating fast and my hands were shaking. When it was my turn, I walked up to the front of the class and started talking. I forgot some parts but I kept going.

When I finished, my teacher said I did a good job. My classmates clapped for me. I felt very happy and proud of myself.

I learned that it is okay to be scared but you should try anyway. Now I am not as scared of presentations anymore. I know that if I practice hard, I can do things even when they are hard.

**Rubric Score** · 루브릭 점수 Content & Analysis **2/4** · Command of Evidence **2/4** · Coherence & Style **3/4** · Conventions **3/4**

#### ✓ Strengths

- Clear narrative arc with a beginning, middle, and end
- Uses specific details (dolphins project, practicing at home) that ground the story
- Ends with a genuine reflection on what was learned

#### ▲ Areas for Growth

- Language is functional but lacks sensory detail and vivid description — what did the classroom look like? sound like?
- The emotional experience is told rather than shown ('I was really scared' vs. showing physical symptoms, inner dialogue)
- The lesson in the conclusion is a cliché ('it is okay to be scared') without a deeper or more personal insight

## Sample B · Advanced ( AAP · GT · Honors )

Twenty-eight faces. That was all I could count before my eyes snapped to the ceiling. Twenty-eight classmates, my teacher Mrs. Nakamura, and one poster about ocean acidification that I had spent three weeks making — and now couldn't seem to see past the edge of my own shaking hands.

Moving to a new school in fourth grade had been hard enough. My English was still choppy at the seams, and American kids talked fast, laughed at jokes I didn't catch, and seemed to have known each other forever. So when Mrs. Nakamura assigned oral presentations in October, my stomach dropped. Speaking in front of the class felt like the worst possible combination of everything I was still afraid of: my accent, my pauses, my tendency to translate in my head before every sentence.

I almost faked sick the morning of the presentations. But I had stayed up past midnight cutting out photographs of coral bleaching and practicing my transitions until they stopped sounding like announcements at a train station. I told myself: you either go, or you spend the rest of the year afraid. I went.

I don't remember every word I said. I remember that my voice shook at the beginning and steadied somewhere around the second slide. I remember that Marcus, the boy in the front row who never seemed to pay attention to anything, leaned forward when I explained how rising ocean temperatures were stripping color from the Great Barrier Reef. I remember that when I finished, the room was quiet for one long second — and then they clapped.

What I learned that day wasn't simply that hard things get easier with practice, though they do. I learned something harder: that showing up imperfectly is not the same as failing. My accent didn't disappear. I still stumbled over 'photosynthesis.' But I also made Marcus lean forward. I had said something worth listening to — and that felt like the first moment I genuinely belonged somewhere in this country.

**Rubric Score** · 루브릭 점수   Content & Analysis **4/4** · Command of Evidence **4/4** · Coherence & Style **4/4** · Conventions **4/4**

### ✓ Strengths

- Opening line ('Twenty-eight faces') is a masterful in medias res hook that creates immediate tension
- Uses 'show don't tell' consistently — the emotional experience is conveyed through specific physical details and internal dialogue
- The challenge is layered (new school + language barrier + presentation) creating rich, authentic complexity
- Conclusion delivers a genuinely surprising and mature insight about imperfect belonging rather than a generic lesson

### ▲ Areas for Growth

- The passage of time between 'practicing' and 'the day of' could be bridged with a brief transitional phrase
- Exceptionally strong — minimal revision needed at this level

**Prompt 10** ·  Narrative

**Write a story about a character who discovers something unexpected.**

예상치 못한 것을 발견하는 인물에 관한 이야기를 써보시오.

**Sample A · Below ~ On Grade Level**

One day, a girl named Lily was exploring the woods near her house. She had never gone very far into the woods before because her mom told her not to. But one afternoon she decided to go further than usual.

As Lily walked deeper into the woods, she found a small door in the side of a big tree. She was very surprised because she had never seen a door in a tree before. She opened the door and inside she found a tiny room with little chairs and tables. It looked like someone lived there.

Lily looked around carefully. She found a small note on the table that said, 'Welcome. Please do not tell anyone about us.' Lily was very curious about who lived there. She sat down in one of the little chairs, but it broke because she was too big.

Lily decided to leave the room and go home. She wanted to come back and find out more. She never told anyone what she found, just like the note said.

Lily went back to the woods many times after that. She always left a small piece of bread near the door. She never found out who lived there, but she kept the secret her whole life.

**Rubric Score** · 루브릭 점수   Content & Analysis **2/4** · Command of Evidence **2/4** · Coherence & Style **3/4** · Conventions **3/4**

✓ **Strengths**

- Creative and imaginative premise (tiny door in a tree) with a clear narrative progression
- Shows some character consistency — Lily honors the note's request, suggesting integrity
- Ends with an open, somewhat poignant detail (leaving bread) that adds a small emotional resonance

▲ **Areas for Growth**

- Setting description is minimal — the woods and the tiny room are named but not brought to life with sensory language
- Lily's emotional response to the discovery is only told ('very surprised,' 'very curious') not shown through action or thought
- The story lacks a true climax or meaningful conflict — events follow each other without building tension or revealing theme

## Sample B · Advanced ( AAP · GT · Honors )

The summer Grandma died, nobody at home knew what to do with their hands. Dad made dinner every night at exactly five o'clock and then stood at the sink washing dishes long after they were clean. Mom sorted Grandma's belongings into boxes labeled KEEP, DONATE, and UNSURE. There were a lot of boxes labeled UNSURE.

The attic was Jonah's idea. He was eleven and he needed somewhere to go that wasn't full of people being careful around each other. He told his parents he was looking for an old board game, which was partly true. He found one — Scrabble, missing an 'S' — but he also found a shoebox tucked behind the water heater, wrapped in a rubber band so old it snapped when he touched it.

Inside was a stack of letters. Not to Grandma — from her. Dated 1962. Addressed to someone named Thomas R. Kellner in a city Jonah had never heard of, in handwriting so loopy and hopeful that it didn't look like his grandmother's at all. They had never been sent.

Jonah sat on the dusty attic floor for a long time. He was not old enough to understand everything the letters said, but he understood enough: that his grandmother had loved someone before Grandpa, that something had gone wrong, that she had kept this secret — carefully, privately — for sixty years. He thought about the boxes labeled UNSURE downstairs and suddenly understood why his mother couldn't bring herself to choose.

He put the letters back in the shoebox. He didn't replace the rubber band. Instead, he brought the box downstairs and set it on the kitchen table without saying a word. He watched his mother see it, and then he watched her pick it up and carry it to her room. She was in there for a long time. When she came out, she sat beside him on the couch — not careful, not sad in the particular way she'd been sad all summer — and said, 'I didn't know she had secrets.' 'Everyone does,' Jonah said, surprising himself. He wasn't sure where that had come from. But it felt true.

**Rubric Score** · 루브릭 점수 Content & Analysis **4/4** · Command of Evidence **4/4** · Coherence & Style **4/4** · Conventions **4/4**

### ✓ Strengths

- The opening paragraph is emotionally sophisticated and immediately establishes a compelling, layered context
- The 'unexpected discovery' operates on multiple levels — not just the letters but what they reveal about grief, memory, and family secrets
- Dialogue and gesture ('set it on the kitchen table without saying a word') replace exposition masterfully
- Final line ('Everyone does') delivers a thematic punch that resonates beyond the story's events — exceptional for any grade level

### ▲ Areas for Growth

- Thomas R. Kellner's story could be hinted at more specifically (one line from the letters) to give readers a more vivid sense of what Jonah read
- A brief description of the physical attic would ground the scene more concretely