



# **Grade 5 Informational Writing Guide**

## **Student Pages for Print or Projection**

### **SECTION 6: Authentic Writing Tasks**



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## PROMPT (1)

Our solar system has fascinated people for centuries. Explain what the solar system contains, how we've explored the Solar System, and how scientists intend to learn more about it.

Think about it - is this prompt informational or opinion? How do you know?

## PREWRITING FRAMEWORK:

TOPIC: \_\_\_\_\_

MAIN IDEA/REASON #1: \_\_\_\_\_

MAIN IDEA/REASON #2: \_\_\_\_\_

MAIN IDEA/REASON #3: \_\_\_\_\_ (etc...)

## REMEMBER:

- Use the prewriting framework to plan your report.
- Refer to the PILLAR to help write a well-organized, fully elaborated piece.
- Analyze for GIVENS and VARIABLES.
- Engage in research, if necessary. Take clear notes.
- Begin with a strong lead and clear topic sentence.
- Be sure your main idea/reason sentences are broad yet distinct.
- Use the detail-generating questions to generate vivid, specific details.
- Include anecdotes, quotes, statistics, amazing facts, and/or descriptive segments.
- Creatively restate your main ideas/reasons in your conclusion.



# Student Page

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## PROMPT (2)

Where would we be without electricity? Imagine for a moment a world without electrical appliances. Which three appliances would you miss the most, and why? Be sure to discuss the benefits of these appliances, and explain the hardships you would experience without them.

Think about it - is this prompt informational or opinion? How do you know?

## PREWRITING FRAMEWORK:

TOPIC: \_\_\_\_\_

MAIN IDEA/REASON #1: \_\_\_\_\_

MAIN IDEA/REASON #2: \_\_\_\_\_

MAIN IDEA/REASON #3: \_\_\_\_\_ (etc...)

## REMEMBER:

- Use the prewriting framework to plan your piece.
- Refer to the PILLAR to help write a well-organized, fully elaborated essay.
- Analyze for GIVENS and VARIABLES.
- Begin with a strong lead and clear topic sentence.
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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## PROMPT (3)

Pollution of the environment is a concern that all people share. Write a piece that discusses how pollution occurs, what damage is caused by pollution, and what people are doing to prevent or correct it.

Think about it - is this prompt informational or opinion? How do you know?

## PREWRITING FRAMEWORK:

TOPIC: \_\_\_\_\_

MAIN IDEA/REASON #1: \_\_\_\_\_

MAIN IDEA/REASON #2: \_\_\_\_\_

MAIN IDEA/REASON #3: \_\_\_\_\_ (etc...)

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# Student Page

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## PROMPT (4)

All young people dream about what they will be when they grow up. Write a piece describing your future job and what it will offer you. Be sure to include details about the skills you'll need and responsibilities it entails.

Think about it - is this prompt informational or opinion? How do you know?

## PREWRITING FRAMEWORK:

TOPIC: \_\_\_\_\_

MAIN IDEA/REASON #1: \_\_\_\_\_

MAIN IDEA/REASON #2: \_\_\_\_\_

MAIN IDEA/REASON #3: \_\_\_\_\_ (etc...)

## REMEMBER:

- Use the prewriting framework to plan your piece.
- Refer to the PILLAR to help write a well-organized, fully elaborated report.
- Analyze prompt for GIVENS and VARIABLES.
- Conduct research. Take clear notes.
- Begin with a strong lead and clear topic sentence.
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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## PROMPT (5)

Write an essay about your favorite holiday. Be sure to explain all the reasons why this holiday is so special to you.

Think about it - is this prompt informational or opinion? How do you know?

## PREWRITING FRAMEWORK:

TOPIC: \_\_\_\_\_

MAIN IDEA/REASON #1: \_\_\_\_\_

MAIN IDEA/REASON #2: \_\_\_\_\_

MAIN IDEA/REASON #3: \_\_\_\_\_ (etc...)

## REMEMBER:

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- Begin with a strong lead and clear topic sentence.
- Be sure your main idea/reason sentences are broad yet distinct.
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# Student Page

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## PROMPT (6)

Everyone enjoys a good movie. You can go to the theater and see a movie on the big screen, you can rent a DVD, or stream a movie at your house. Compare the benefits of theater-going vs. home viewing. Which do you prefer and why?

Think about it - is this prompt informational or opinion? How do you know?

## PREWRITING FRAMEWORK:

TOPIC: \_\_\_\_\_

MAIN IDEA/REASON #1: \_\_\_\_\_

MAIN IDEA/REASON #2: \_\_\_\_\_

MAIN IDEA/REASON #3: \_\_\_\_\_ (etc...)

## REMEMBER:

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## PROMPT (7)

We all value a good friend. Write a piece about a good friend of yours. Be sure to explain what you like about this friend and why this friend is so special.

Think about it - is this prompt informational or opinion? How do you know?

### PREWRITING FRAMEWORK:

TOPIC: \_\_\_\_\_

MAIN IDEA/REASON #1: \_\_\_\_\_

MAIN IDEA/REASON #2: \_\_\_\_\_

MAIN IDEA/REASON #3: \_\_\_\_\_ (etc...)

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# Student Page

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## PROMPT (8)

Adults aren't the only ones who need to earn money. Kids need money, too! Write a piece describing the various ways that young people can earn money.

Think about it - is this prompt informational or opinion? How do you know?

## PREWRITING FRAMEWORK:

TOPIC: \_\_\_\_\_

MAIN IDEA/REASON #1: \_\_\_\_\_

MAIN IDEA/REASON #2: \_\_\_\_\_

MAIN IDEA/REASON #3: \_\_\_\_\_ (etc...)

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## PROMPT (9)

Think about taking a vacation. Would you prefer a visit to the city, or to the country? Write an essay that compares everything city and country vacations have to offer, and explain the reasons for your preference.

Think about it - is this prompt informational or opinion? How do you know?

### PREWRITING FRAMEWORK:

TOPIC: \_\_\_\_\_

MAIN IDEA/REASON #1: \_\_\_\_\_

MAIN IDEA/REASON #2: \_\_\_\_\_

MAIN IDEA/REASON #3: \_\_\_\_\_ (etc...)

### REMEMBER:

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# Student Page

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## PROMPT (10)

Babysitting is a huge responsibility and a great way to earn money. Write a piece explaining how to become a successful babysitter.

Think about it - is this prompt informational or opinion? How do you know?

### PREWRITING FRAMEWORK:

TOPIC: \_\_\_\_\_

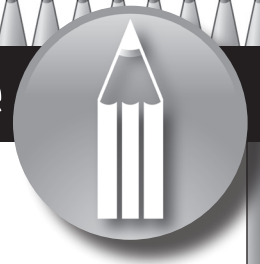
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MAIN IDEA/REASON #2: \_\_\_\_\_

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## PROMPT (11)

People the world over visit museums. Explain what makes museums such popular places to spend time.

Think about it - is this prompt informational or opinion? How do you know?

### PREWRITING FRAMEWORK:

TOPIC: \_\_\_\_\_

MAIN IDEA/REASON #1: \_\_\_\_\_

MAIN IDEA/REASON #2: \_\_\_\_\_

MAIN IDEA/REASON #3: \_\_\_\_\_ (etc...)

### REMEMBER:

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# Student Page

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## PROMPT (12)

Your school provides you with many enriching, fun experiences. Write a piece describing the subjects or activities at school that you find the most rewarding.

Think about it - is this prompt informational or opinion? How do you know?

### PREWRITING FRAMEWORK:

TOPIC: \_\_\_\_\_

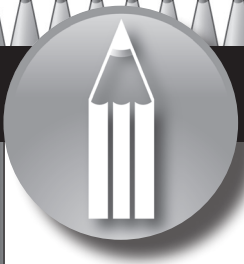
MAIN IDEA/REASON #1: \_\_\_\_\_

MAIN IDEA/REASON #2: \_\_\_\_\_

MAIN IDEA/REASON #3: \_\_\_\_\_ (etc...)

### REMEMBER:

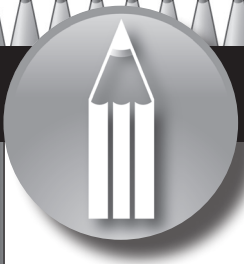
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## COMMON LITERARY THEMES

- Acceptance
- Courage
- Perseverance
- Cooperation
- Compassion
- Honesty
- Kindness
- Loyalty
- Responsibility
- Ambition
- Appreciating what you have
- Forgiveness
- The Value of Hard Work
- Being a Graceful Loser
- Learning from Mistakes
- Being True to Yourself
- Individuality
- Importance of Family
- Friendship
- Determination
- Inequality – Justice

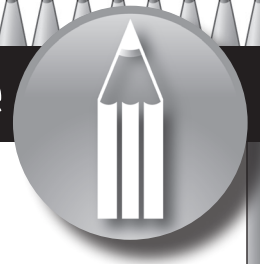
*Can you think of any others?*



# Student Reference Page

## FRAMING QUESTIONS FOR READING AND RESPONDING TO LITERATURE

- Who is the *main character*? (point of view character or protagonist)
- Where is the story set?
- What is the *tone* or *mood* of the story?
- What is the main character's *problem, challenge, or adventure*?
- What is the main character's *motivation*? (what the character wants)
- *Who/what stands in the way* of the main character's motivation? (antagonist)
- Where does the author use *suspense* and/or *foreshadowing*?
- *How does the main character feel* about the situation?
- How does the main character *show his/her feelings*?
- How did the main character *grow and change* in response to story events?
- What figurative language did the author use and why?
- What is the *theme* of the story and how is it demonstrated?
- *What would you do* if faced with a similar challenge or adventure?



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## READ LIKE AN AUTHOR

In this excerpt from The Voyage of Lucy P. Simmons, 12 year-old Lucy is challenged to face her fears and take a sail with her friends. The novel is set in 1906 and began with Lucy and her mother and father taking a sail off the coast of Maine. A storm rolls in and as her father expertly brings the boat around they encounter a desperate man on another disabled boat. Lucy's father attempts to rescue him, and their boat capsizes. Lucy is the only survivor. So, naturally, getting into a boat again is difficult for her. Here we see a conversation with Marni, her guardian, and Annie, a younger child in Marni's care.

"Look at me, Lucy," Marni whispered. I felt her hand beneath my chin, raising my face to hers. I took a deep breath and opened my eyes. "It took great courage for your Father to do what he did. Remember that."

I looked away, my Uncle's words about the accident taunting me--how I'd wished a hundred times that Father hadn't been so brave, that if he hadn't been courageous he'd still be here--that his courage wasn't something I was ready to give him credit for--not in the face of the tremendous loss it caused me. Marni turned my face back toward her.

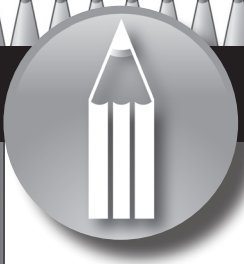
"Once you've learned courage," she said, "all of the other lessons are easy."

Hadn't I been courageous thus far? But would courage alone be enough to propel me aboard that boat?

Marni took my hands in hers, her grip amazingly strong.

"Courage is not about being unafraid," she said. "Courage has to do with moving forward in the face of fear. Do you understand?"

I nodded. I understood. I just hadn't accepted it. Not yet, anyway. She gave my hands one last squeeze and sent me off toward my room. I heard Annie skittering away from the door and diving under her covers. I undressed in the darkness and slipped into bed--a bed that felt nothing like my own bed back home. What would happen to me out there on the water? I swallowed back my tears, fighting to stifle my crying. The bed shook with my silent sobs.



# Student Page

I became aware of something soft against my cheek. I caught my breath and reached out.

“It’s me, Annie.” Her small hand patted my face.

“Everything will be all right, Lucy,” she whispered. The moonlight streaming in the window illuminated the top of her head, encircling her blonde curls like a halo. I sat up in bed, torn between surprise and embarrassment, touched and amazed that a child so young could recognize the quiet sounds of despair.

“Marni makes everything all right. You’ll see.” She sat on the edge of my bed and put her face right up next to mine, her eyes huge and round.

“You’ll come on the boat with us,” she said, nodding her head up and down, confirming the plan. “Yes, you will.”

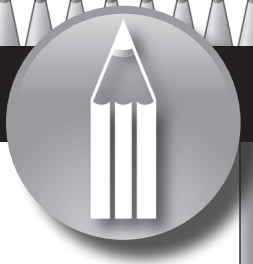
I nodded. “I’ll go,” I said, the sound of my own words making me tremble. I knew I was only pacifying her, masking my shame and my terror. “I’ll go,” I said again, desperately willing her to go off to bed.

“Do you promise?” she asked.

I swallowed and took a deep breath.

“Promise,” I whispered, doubting even as I made the vow that I would actually be capable of carrying it out.

Taken from Lucy at Sea by Barbara Mariconda  
Katherine Tegen Books, HarperCollins Publishers © 2013



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## READ LIKE AN AUTHOR

You've read an excerpt from a narrative story. Now read each framing question, below. On the lines beneath each question, turn the key words into a simple response, using evidence from the story.

**Ex. Who is the main character (point of view character or protagonist) in the story?**

- The main character in this story, also known as the point of view character or protagonist, is Lucy.

Or:

- In this story Lucy is the main character, also known as the point of view character or the protagonist.

1. Where is the story set? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What is the tone or mood of the story? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What is the main character's problem, challenge, or adventure?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. What is the main character's motivation (what does the main character want)?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Who or what stands in the way of the main character's motivation?

\_\_\_\_\_



# Student Page

6. Where does the author use suspense and/or foreshadowing?

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7. How does the main character feel about the situation?

---

8. How does the main character show his/her feelings?

---

9. How did the main character grow and change in response to story events?

---

10. What figurative language did the author use and why?

---

11. What is the *theme* of the story and how is it demonstrated?

---

12. What would you do if faced with a similar challenge or adventure?

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## NOTHING TO DO AND NOWHERE TO GO

The school bus coughed and strained along the steep, rutted road that curved along the mountainside. Alex pulled out his phone and looked at the time. 3:30. Back in New York his friends would be leaving school, making their way toward Columbus Circle. Yellow taxi-cabs would be rushing past, horses and buggies lining up to take tourists for rides in Central Park. They'd stop in Starbucks for a snack or a vanilla bean Frappuccino, and clown around as they headed to the darkness of the subway for the afternoon commute home. The crowds, the noise, the activity... missing all that was like a dull ache that never really let up.

Alex sighed, his forehead pressed to the cool glass window of the bus. Since his parents divorced everything had changed. His mother'd convinced him that a new start would be best. And so, here they were, back in the small country town in rural Vermont where she'd grown up, the three of them – his mom, his sister, and Alex - living in an old drafty studio on his grandparent's farm. Just yesterday his mother had practically yanked him out of the chair in front of the TV. "Get outside Alex! Take advantage of this place. You're wasting your days watching who knows what! You can find yourself here, I promise." She was always talking like that, about "finding yourself" and "being one with nature." The bus slowed at his stop and Alex got off, another afternoon stretching out before him. He trudged up the path to the house. The pick-up truck wasn't in the driveway. That meant his mother had picked up his sister and the two of them were out someplace. Good. That meant he'd have the place to himself. But, when he tried the door, the knob didn't budge. He was locked out.

Alex threw his backpack on the steps and sat down. Now what? He could go to his grandparent's house, but he was tired of their well-meaning questions about school, and new friends, and how he liked it here. They were worried about him, and he hated

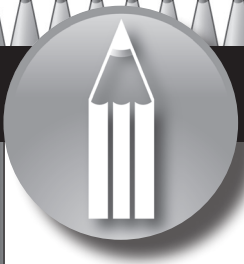
(continued)



that. He wished all of them would just leave him be. Dreading the thought of his grandma seeing him sitting on the porch like a sad-sack and running over to rescue him, Alex left his backpack there and headed through the backyard.

At the back of the property sat an old dilapidated barn, with hinged doors that hung in a lopsided way and creaked with the wind. Around the old structure wound a dirt trail, probably an old sheep path. Without thinking Alex set off, eyes on his feet, continuing on until the path forked. He looked up. To the left was a field of tall wavy grass that sighed with the breeze. To the right, the path meandered into a wooded area.

He turned right. It was like entering a different outdoor room, this one shaded and cool. Tall trees formed a canopy overhead, and ferns and bushes pressed in on the trail from both sides. Sunlight filtered through the leaves, dappling the path. The air seemed fresher there, and Alex breathed in the rich earthy green smell. It was as though this place was sheltered from the outside world, everything hushed and quiet. The only thing he heard was the cushy sound of his sneakers on the thick blanket of pine needles that covered the path. Every so often there was the chirp of a bird, or of some small forest creature scurrying in the underbrush, quieting as Alex approached. The further Alex went, the more magical the place seemed to him. There, an ancient oak, probably struck in half by lightening, its limbs cracked at strange angles, its enormous grizzled roots unearthed like something out of “The Hobbit.” Thick vines wrapped around the crooked trunk of a tree like a coiled snake. Soon a gurgling sound off to the right caught his attention, a twinkling of light between the undergrowth. Alex edged off the main trail toward the brook. Dragonflies flitted over the stream that churned over rocks toward a small waterfall. Some of the leaves had already turned orangey gold and flitted from the trees into the water where they bobbed like small yellow boats. Alex



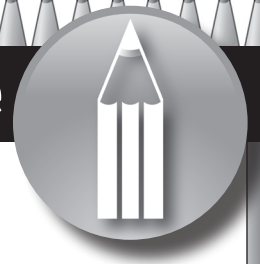
## Student Page

found a large ledge of rock, climbed up and sat down. The autumn sun was warm on his shoulders, and between that and the sound of the waterfall he forgot himself for a bit. It was just sun, and water, and earth.

Dusk comes early in Vermont, and as soon as the sun began to sink the temperature dropped. The shadows grew deeper and Alex felt a chill. He got up, climbed down from his rocky perch and retraced his steps along the trail. Everything looked different in the last light of day, the shadows falling longer and darker, the trees closing in. All of his senses seemed sharper, and he paid close attention to the path.

As he emerged from the woods Alex checked his phone. 5:30. He glanced over his shoulder. The trail had all but disappeared into the shadows. The trees looked black against the dark blue sky. He'd been gone almost two hours, and for the first time since he'd moved, he hadn't thought about New York City even once. Part of him felt disloyal. New York was his home, that's where his friends were. He didn't want to let that go.

But, at the same time, Alex knew, without a doubt, that the next day he'd venture into the woods again.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## IDENTIFY THE THEME

Identify a theme in Forest Package and in Nothing to Do and Nowhere to Go. Write an essay that explains how the theme of the story is demonstrated through the dialogue and description and how the theme is shown in the poem through the examples provided. Be sure to include specific details from both texts to support your main ideas. Also, describe a time in your life when you had a difficult choice to make and how that helped you understand the theme of these texts.

### Forest Package

Wrapped in emerald leaves and mosses,  
Tied with bows of curling vine,  
Decked with bursts of cheerful daisies,  
Scented sweet with earth and pine.

Perfect gift to those who notice,  
Those who take the time to tread  
between the trees and through the meadows,  
beneath the birdsong overhead.

Woodland duff makes soft the footsteps  
of the one who takes the prize.  
Stone and stream she tiptoes over,  
Senses keen - the ears, the eyes.

Present daily for the taking,  
there for all who care to see  
the gift of nature in the forest,  
always lovely, always free.

Once the prize is yours, you'll keep it,  
revisit it, or just recall  
the way you felt when one with nature,  
with creation, one with all.



# Student Page

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Comparison Grid

	EVIDENCE
Theme of Story	
Theme of Poem	
My View of Nature (Personal Experience)	



## SENTENCE STARTERS FOR A LITERARY ANALYSIS TASK EXPLORING THEME IN STORY AND POETRY

I believe the theme of both texts is \_\_\_\_\_.

In paragraph # \_\_\_\_\_ we learn that \_\_\_\_\_.

Both texts explore \_\_\_\_\_.

For example, \_\_\_\_\_.

This is evidenced by \_\_\_\_\_.

Another example of this is \_\_\_\_\_.

The author/poet illustrates how \_\_\_\_\_.

The dialogue shows us \_\_\_\_\_.

The text highlights \_\_\_\_\_.

When Alex says “\_\_\_\_\_”, we see that \_\_\_\_\_.

We learn in paragraph \_\_\_\_\_ that \_\_\_\_\_.

On the other hand, the poet uses \_\_\_\_\_.

The reader understands how \_\_\_\_\_.

The theme in the poem is expressed in \_\_\_\_\_.

In paragraph \_\_\_\_\_, the author shows how \_\_\_\_\_.

When you read the poem aloud you notice \_\_\_\_\_.

In each stanza, the poet presents \_\_\_\_\_.

I could relate to this theme because \_\_\_\_\_.

It is interesting to note that \_\_\_\_\_.

In my life I experienced \_\_\_\_\_.

The difference between the texts is \_\_\_\_\_.

In both the story and the poem \_\_\_\_\_.

The author/poet points out that \_\_\_\_\_.

In addition, \_\_\_\_\_.

Furthermore, \_\_\_\_\_.

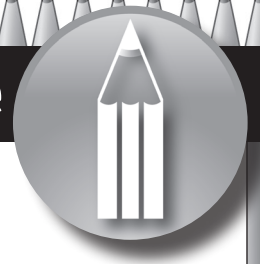
Both the author and the poet \_\_\_\_\_.

The details suggest that \_\_\_\_\_.

If I were in Alex’s situation I would \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_.

The reader can conclude that \_\_\_\_\_.

I’d agree that \_\_\_\_\_.



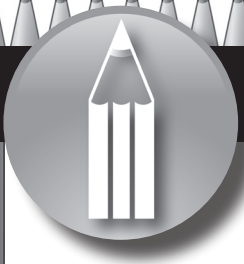
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## SAMPLE ESSAY: LITERARY ANALYSIS TASK – THEME IN A NARRATIVE STORY AND A POEM

The story Nothing to Do and Nowhere to Go and the poem titled Forest Package both explore the theme of the value of nature. In the story, this theme is explored through the point of view of the main character, Alex. The poet studies the theme through the use of vivid descriptive images and by comparing nature to a gift or package to be unwrapped and enjoyed.

As the story opens, Alex, the point of view character, who just moved from NYC to the country sadly recalls his full, busy life in the city with his friends. In paragraph one, the author describes Alex recalling the bustling city with yellow taxi cabs, horses and buggies near Columbus Circle, Alex's daily stop at Starbuck's with his friends, and their exciting ride on the subway. We learn that Alex's parents just divorced and Alex, his sister, and mother moved to "a small country town in rural Vermont." We see Alex's frustration and boredom when he "sighed, his forehead pressed to the cool glass window of the (school) bus." The author also compares Alex missing NYC to "a dull ache that never really let up.

When Alex gets locked out he ventures into the woods near the house. His mother had told him to get out in nature. Alex tells the reader, "She was always talking like that, about "finding yourself and being one with nature." Once he sets off he's surprised by the beauty surrounding him. Through the main character's five senses the author helps us experience the vivid details along the trail: sunlight dappling the path, the rich earthy green smell, the feel of the thick blanket of pine needles beneath his feet, the sound of forest creatures scurrying in the underbrush. In spite of himself Alex becomes absorbed in the forest. His change in attitude is evidenced here: "Alex found a large ledge of rock, climbed up and sat down. The autumn sun was warm on his shoulders, and between that and the sound of the waterfall he forgot himself for a bit." We see further evidence of his new appreciation for the gift of nature when the



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author reveals: "He'd been gone almost two hours, and for the first time since he'd moved, he hadn't thought about New York City even once." The story ends with Alex's decision: "Alex knew, without a doubt, that the next day he'd venture into the woods again."

The poet reveals the theme through a metaphor, comparing nature to a gift to be opened and enjoyed. The title uses the word "package" and in each stanza we see a word referent or reference to a package. In stanza one the poet uses gift wrap and bows, in stanza two, perfect gift. The third and fifth stanzas nature is compared to a prize, in the fourth we hear "present" and "gift." This proves that the poet places a high value on nature. The poem, like the story, also highlights vivid description of what the forest has to offer, using the five senses: emerald leaves and mosses, curling vine, cheerful daisies, birdsong, woodland duff, stone and stream. All of this is presented rhythmically, the second and fourth line of each stanza rhyming.

It is clear that both the author and the poet value and appreciate the beauty of nature, and see it as a gift to enhance your life. In my own life I know that I always feel calmer and happier when I'm outdoors in a natural setting. After years of family camping trips I can understand what Alex's mother meant when she said, "You can find yourself here, I promise." Those who spend time outside in nature are too busy observing the beauty to feel lonely or bored. This is why nature is such a gift.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

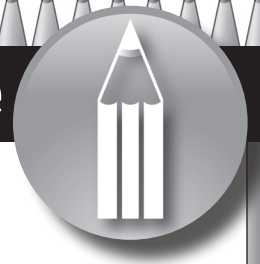
## THE WINNING GOAL

Kevin slipped effortlessly past the defense and skillfully zigzagged the ball the length of the field. With one swift punt he shot it, just outside the reach of the goalie's glove. The crowd roared as it hit and ricocheted off the back of the net, dead center. There was nothing like the feeling of connecting with the ball that way, the sense of being totally in control. And delivering the winning goal was even better. A split second later the rest of the team surrounded him, slapping him on the back, exchanging high-fives. Matt Kelly, the biggest kid on the team, wrapped his arms around Kevin's legs and hoisted him up in the air. His teammates began the chant that had become almost routine this season, "Kev-in! Kev-in! Kev-in!" Looking down at them, Kevin laughed and raised an arm in triumph. But then, the wind was sucked out of his sails. His twin brother, his near mirror image, hung back from the group. It was like seeing himself – or rather a sad, awkward, defeated version of himself. Their eyes met for the briefest moment before Cam looked down and headed toward the field house.

"Wait Cam," Kevin called, breaking away from the throng. "Hey, wait!" But his brother kept going, his slight limp more noticeable than ever.

"Let him go," Matt said, as the opposing team came to offer half-hearted handshakes. "He's just jealous!"

But Kevin knew it was more complicated than that. It wasn't just about soccer. It was about school, and grades, and nearly everything else. For once, Kevin wanted to be able to be proud without feeling guilty that he'd outshined his brother still again. Was it his fault that he'd been born first, the bigger, healthier twin? The one to whom



things came easily? And that Cam, because of a difficult birth, because of his asthma, his slight limp, his learning disabilities, struggled with just about everything? Of course it wasn't his fault. But Kevin somehow always felt that it was.

Cam avoided the others in the locker room, showered quickly and threw his gear in his bag. Kevin's irritation grew. Couldn't Cam say something? Maybe, "Hey Kev, nice job!" Would that kill him? Even his parents never said much, for fear of showing up Cam. It was always Cam.

Kevin grabbed his things and followed his brother outside, everything he longed to say right there on the tip of his tongue. Cam was sitting on the bench waiting for their parents to pick them up, unraveling a thread on his gym bag. Kevin was about to open his mouth when Cam glanced up, then abruptly turned away, running the back of his hand across his eyes, his face splotched with tears.

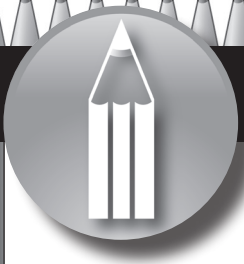
The words Kevin had planned deserted him. "Cam," he said, "What's wrong?"

"Nothing..." His brother's voice was muffled, and he started to wheeze. Once again Kevin didn't know what to feel. Sad? Sorry? Guilty? What was he supposed to do?

The two of them waited in silence until their mother pulled up. "How was the game?" she asked as they piled in. "Who won?"

"We did," Cam said, quietly, staring out the car window. "Kevin scored the winning goal. He's one away from breaking the school record."

Mom smiled, ignoring Cam's flat tone of voice. "My boys are amazing!" she said. Not, "Great job Kev!" Not, "Maybe next time you'll break that record!" Well, Kevin thought, I will break that record.



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The next time on the field, Kevin's game was somehow off. A misstep here. A foul there. Finally, at the end of the second half Kevin found his stride. He was finally in control, dribbling toward the goal, shifting away from his opponents, shielding the ball. Suddenly, before him, a clear, straight shot – and his chance to break the school record. Out of the corner of his eye Kevin glimpsed Cam off to his right. For a fraction of a second their eyes met. Without thinking, Kevin nodded toward the goal, passed the ball to his brother, and held his breath. No one on either team would have expected that. Kevin felt he was watching it all in slow motion. The surprise on Cam's face, turning to determination. The way Cam ran, dribbling awkwardly, biting his bottom lip, taking the shot.

"Score!"

No one seemed more shocked than Cam. The team went wild. Cam stood still, scanning the group, until his eyes met Kevin's. Kevin saw something new in his brother's face, and for a moment he forgot that he'd just given up his chance to break the school record. He ran over to Cam, slapped him on the back.

"Great job, Cam!" he said. "You did it!"

"No," Cam said. "It was because of you, Kevin. Thank you!"

"But you scored the winning goal, Cam. I just passed the ball."

They walked into the field house together, Cam's limp a little less noticeable. Kevin glimpsed the plaque on the wall – the one that listed the High Scorers. His name wouldn't be on that plaque. But, it didn't really seem to matter any more.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## EVERYBODY NEEDS THEIR OWN DREAM

Lisa sat at the piano, shoulders hunched from hours of practice. She sighed, lifted her fingers from the keys and stretched. Through the window she glimpsed the brilliant blue summer skies, hardly a cloud to be seen. A warm breeze blew back the sheer curtains and carried with it the sounds of splashing and laughing.

“Marco!”

“Polo!”

“Marco!”

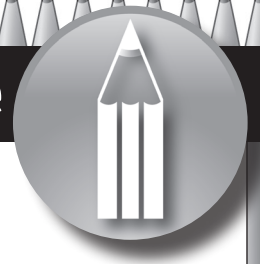
“Polo!”

More laughter. Her best friends Cat and Dawneesha were doing what you’re supposed to be doing during summer vacation – having fun. She had an hour of practice to go. Maybe they’d still be swimming and she could grab her bathing suit and towel and join them. Her mother’s voice from the kitchen interrupted that thought. “Lisa, why not try the second movement again? It’s just the run that needs work. And the grace notes.”

Lisa dropped her head to the keys, causing a horrible blur of sound. Her mother appeared in the doorway. “What’s the matter, Honey?” she asked. “You have plenty of time before the audition. You’ll get it! Nothing to worry about!”

Lisa looked up. “I know.” Without even glancing at the music she began the second movement again, her mom watching. Lisa could play this sonata in her sleep. And, the Bach inventions. Her live audition for the Julliard Youth program was in just two weeks. As her mom always reminded her – people all over the world compete to go to New York’s Julliard School of Music. She should be so thrilled that they accepted her first round audition video. But she wasn’t. It was a secret she couldn’t bear to tell her mother. She cringed just thinking about how disappointed her mom would be, after all the money invested in lessons, in the baby grand piano, the trips to NYC.

(continued)



She finished the last notes of the Beethoven piece with a flourish, and from the doorway her mom applauded. “Bravo!” she said, smiling. She gave Lisa a thumbs up and headed back into the kitchen.

Lisa sighed. It was no use. Her mom had wanted to be a concert pianist, but her family hadn’t been able to afford all the lessons and travel it required. So Lisa was fulfilling her mom’s dream. She had the talent. She had the musicianship. She had the support she needed. What she didn’t have was the passion. Her fingers ran over the keys, riffing on a blues tune, in sharp contrast to the Beethoven, her left hand laying down a funky bass line. This was what she wanted to play – blues, jazz. Maybe in a band. She didn’t care about winning a contest or performing in a concert hall. But, how could she let her mom down? And would she be wasting her talent? Did talent come with a responsibility to pursue it in a particular way? Lisa wasn’t sure.

The days passed, and Lisa became even more confident in her performance. The audition was just a week away. Her mom was on the phone in the other room, making hotel reservations and buying plane tickets for their big trip to New York City. Cat and Dawneesha came by. “Came to wish you luck,” Cat exclaimed.

“Yeah, we can hear you practicing away in here,” Dawneesha added.

“Thanks,” Lisa mumbled.

“You don’t seem too excited.” Dawneesha looked at Lisa closely. “What’s wrong? After all this practicing you can’t be nervous?”

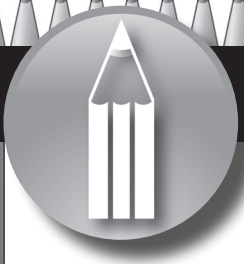
“I’m not nervous. I just... don’t really want to do it.”

Cat raised an eyebrow. “Now you decide you don’t want to do it? What’s up with that?”

“Shhh!” Lisa said. “I don’t want my mom to hear.”

Her friends were staring at her strangely. “Your mom doesn’t know you don’t want to do this?” Dawneesha asked.

“Of course not!” Lisa shook her head. “This is her dream for me!”



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“But what about your dreams?” Dawneesha demanded. “What about that?”

“I’m not too sure what they are,” Lisa said. “Except I like to play blues. And jazz.” She slid across the piano bench and improvised a twelve bar blues. “Not the stuff I’ll need to play at Julliard.”

“Wow!” Cat said. “That was awesome!”

“And,” Lisa added, “I want to hang out with you guys at the pool.”

Dawneesha gave her a look. “Then you need to have a talk with your mom, girlfriend. She’s a nice lady. She loves you. She’ll understand.

Lisa bit her bottom lip. “I don’t know... She’ll be so disappointed.”

“She’ll be disappointed if she wastes all that money and finds out you’re just pretending to want to be a big shot concert pianist!” Dawneesha exclaimed. “You need to tell her!”

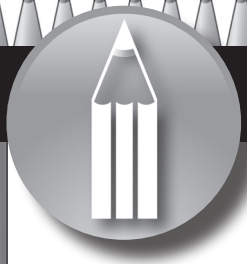
“Yeah,” Cat agreed. “Everybody needs their own dream.” They headed toward the door. “We’ll be at the pool if you want to join us.”

Lisa stared at the piano. She had accomplished so much. The keyboard had become her most constant companion. Would it all have been a waste if she didn’t go to Julliard? Almost without thinking her fingers picked out a jazz tune. She closed her eyes and let the music tumble out of her. Time stood still, or so it seemed. There was nothing but the soulful music and the satisfaction she felt as it flowed from her.

When she was done, she stood up, took one last look at the piano and headed into the kitchen. “Mom,” she said softly. She placed her hand on her mother’s shoulder, feeling very sad that this lovely woman had never been able to pursue her dream. Her mom looked up at her and Lisa wanted to cry. There was nothing but love in her mother’s eyes.

“What is it, sweetheart?”

Lisa couldn’t find the words at first, but she pressed on. “I think I’ve figured something out,” she said. “About finally finding my own dream...”



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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Comparison Grid

	KEVIN	LISA
<b>Situation</b>		
<b>Evidence of Feelings</b>		
<b>Decision: Right or Wrong?</b>		



## **SENTENCE STARTERS FOR A LITERARY ANALYSIS TASK: EXPLORING POINT OF VIEW AND SETTING**

- The narrator's point of view was that \_\_\_\_\_.
- Both texts illustrate how \_\_\_\_\_.
- The author uses action to show us \_\_\_\_\_.
- For example, \_\_\_\_\_.
- This is evidenced by \_\_\_\_\_.
- Another example of this is \_\_\_\_\_.
- The narrator makes a connection between \_\_\_\_\_.
- The dialogue shows us \_\_\_\_\_.
- The narrator's feelings are illustrated through \_\_\_\_\_.
- In paragraph # \_\_\_\_\_.
- (Kevin) was frustrated because \_\_\_\_\_.
- It was important to (Lisa) to \_\_\_\_\_.
- (Lisa) had to consider \_\_\_\_\_.
- The author uses the following phrase \_\_\_\_\_ to show \_\_\_\_\_.
- In paragraph # the narrator describes \_\_\_\_\_.
- It's clear that \_\_\_\_\_.
- It is interesting to note that \_\_\_\_\_.
- This is clear when \_\_\_\_\_.
- (Kevin's) POV is reflected by \_\_\_\_\_.
- (Kevin) understood how Cam felt when \_\_\_\_\_.
- Furthermore, \_\_\_\_\_.
- The narrator points out that \_\_\_\_\_.
- In contrast, \_\_\_\_\_.
- The author effectively describes \_\_\_\_\_.
- The details suggest that \_\_\_\_\_.
- The words, \_\_\_\_\_, show that \_\_\_\_\_.
- (Lisa's) conflict was whether \_\_\_\_\_.
- (Kevin) had a change of heart when \_\_\_\_\_.
- The reader can conclude that \_\_\_\_\_.
- In conclusion, \_\_\_\_\_.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

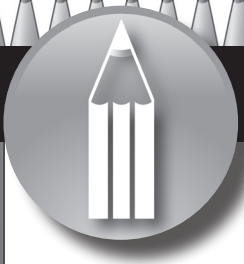
## SAMPLE ESSAY:

### LITERARY ANALYSIS TASK - POINT OF VIEW AND SETTING

In the stories The Winning Goal and Everybody Needs Their Own Dream the main characters have both worked hard to achieve a goal. Neither meets their goal, but for very different reasons. I believe that both made the right decision and that their decisions were dictated and affected by important relationships.

Kevin, the protagonist in The Winning Goal excelled at many things, especially soccer. His personal goal was to break the school record, and he was close to accomplishing this. His challenge was that his twin brother Cam lagged behind him in many things and because of this Kevin felt badly about enjoying his own success. This is evidenced by the following lines from the story: "For once, Kevin wanted to be able to be proud without feeling guilty that he'd outshined his brother still again. Was it his fault that he'd been born first, the bigger, healthier twin?" We see this again in the text, here: "Of course it wasn't his fault. But Kevin somehow always felt that it was." Despite this, when the moment came for Kevin to score the winning goal, he sacrificed it and passed the ball to Cam. We see that Kevin realizes he made the right decision when we see his reaction to Cam's surprise goal: "Kevin saw something new in his brother's face, and for a moment he forgot that he'd just given up his chance to break the school record."

In Everybody Needs Their Own Dream, Lisa, a talented pianist, is scheduled to audition at a famous music school. The reader gets the sense that Lisa is tired of all the practicing: "Lisa sat at the piano, shoulders hunched from hours of practice. She sighed, lifted her fingers from the keys and stretched." We see further evidence of this



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when she hears her friends outside enjoying the swimming pool and thinks that they're: "doing what you're supposed to be doing during summer vacation - having fun. She had an hour of practice to go." But Lisa feels a responsibility to her mom, who wanted to be a concert pianist but never had the chance. And Lisa really was talented. But she wanted to play blues and jazz. In fact, we learn this in the text: "She didn't care about winning a contest or performing in a concert hall." Her friend Dawneesha points out to Lisa that her mom's dream isn't hers, and that "everybody needs their own dream." The story ends with Lisa approaching her mom with a conversation about her own dreams.

I feel strongly that both Kevin and Lisa made the right choices. Both were confident in their own skills and didn't need a record or an audition to prove that. I respect Kevin for understanding Cam's struggles, and using his skill to help Cam taste success. Lisa demonstrated courage when she approached her mom. From the evidence in the story Lisa's mother seems kind and supportive. Dawneesha illustrates this when she describes Lisa's mom: "She's a nice lady. She loves you. She'll understand." I think the theme of both stories had to do with having the inner confidence to have talent without having to always be a winner. I hope if I'm ever in a similar situation that I would have the courage and confidence to do the same.