

# Timed Writing 5

## The Prompt

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One of the challenges of timed writing is making quick decisions about content and organization. The brainstorming stage is limited and requires you to move swiftly into composing your paragraphs. A luxury of drafted writing is that you can spend time exploring different supporting ideas before revising and finalizing your essay.

With timed writing, a thorough understanding of the prompt is first needed. You need to recognize the linguistic task (compare, describe, argue, explain) and create a thesis statement and supporting points that make a clear road map for what you will say. Additionally, you need to check the prompt to ensure that you are addressing all of the points.

Once you have analyzed the prompt, you should be able to start structuring your outline to ensure you have all of the necessary components.

Making a brief list of the parts of the prompt that are most important to respond to or include is a great first step for creating your thesis statement, topic sentences, and overall outline.

Understanding and including all of the parts of the prompt is important for two reasons.

The first reason is that the question is specifically designed to get you to write about the target content. A multi-part question indicates the degree of complexity that the audience expects to find in your response. If you miss information from your response, it can be interpreted as missing knowledge about an important concept for the course.

Second, your audience may attribute missing information to a lack of language. This is especially true in a language test like the TOEFL where the audience knows nothing about your ability other than what you show. Not writing about part of the question could be an avoidance strategy because you do not have the vocabulary or grammar control necessary to respond. This may also be an unfortunate assumption at the college level as well, especially if your professor has minimal interaction with you.

Therefore, it's in your best interest to carefully read through the prompt and dissect it. This strategy will lead to a stronger response with more purposeful organization.

## Exercises

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## Exercise 5.30: Analyze Timed Writing Prompt

Read the prompts below. Identify the linguistic task. Break the prompt down into the individual parts.

1. Many people suggest that self-driving cars are the future for transportation. How will self-driving cars improve people's lives? What do you think the short-term and long-term impacts of these vehicles will be?
2. A significant problem for many teenagers is cyberbullying. Why do you think this is a prevalent issue in today's society? What solutions do you propose for this issue? Be sure to address solutions at the individual, family, and societal levels.
3. Imagine the ideal future city. What does this city look like and how is it different from the one you live in now? Do you think this ideal is possible? Why or why not?

## Exercise 5.31: Timed Writing (Prompt Focus)

Choose one of the prompts below. Set a timer for 30 minutes. Write your response to the question. Remember to leave time for revision.

1. You recently applied for a job, and you moved to the first screening of applicants. Before deciding whether or not to interview you, the committee sends the following question: This position requires an employee to problem solve quickly and to manage multiple tasks. Imagine your supervisor asks you to complete a proposal by the end of day but is unavailable to walk you through the specifics for this task. Explain how you would handle any complications with the proposal.
2. Your family is planning a vacation for everyone. One of your siblings really wants to go to Hawaii, but you know that suggestion will not work for all of the family members. Write an email response explaining why the family should not go to Hawaii and offer another option with explanation of why it is a better fit.



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