

**Santa Clara Unified School District**  
**Winter**  
**6<sup>th</sup> Grade Writing Prompt**



**Persuasive Writing Task**

In this writing task, you will write a persuasive essay.

**Checklist for your writing:**

- Carefully read the prompt and choose **one** to address.
- Organize your essay with a strong introduction, body, and conclusion.
- Use specific details and examples to clarify and defend your position.
- Consider the opposing point of view and include a counterargument.
- Choose specific words that are appropriate for your audience and purpose.
- Vary your sentences to make your writing interesting to read.
- Use appropriate tone and voice.
- Check for mistakes in grammar, spelling, punctuation, and sentence formation.

**Prompts:**

Choose **one** of the following prompts for your essay:

**Locker or Backpack Searches**

District administrators are considering conducting random locker or backpack searches several times a year without letting students know in advance. Your principal will check for guns, knives, and other weapons. Anyone caught with these weapons will be immediately suspended. The principal argues that random searches will not only guard against illegal weapons at school but will also help students feel safer. Write a persuasive essay stating your position on this issue. **Make sure to use the “Checklist for your writing” at the top of this page.**

**OR**

**Personal CD Players / IPODS (MP3 Players)**

District administrators think that personal CD players and IPODS (MP3 Players) should not be allowed in school because they cause interruptions in class and encourage theft on campus. Some students feel that these devices should be allowed during lunch. Write a persuasive essay stating your position on this issue. **Make sure to use the “Checklist for your writing” at the top of this page.**

## Pulling the Rope

By Pleasant DeSpain

In 1770, Samuel Forbes built a house and barn in Canaan, located in the northwest corner of Connecticut. Soon afterward he fell in love with Lucy, the daughter of a local farmer named Amos Pierce. Samuel asked Amos for permission to court his daughter. Amos didn't feel that Samuel was the right man for Lucy. Permission was denied.

Lucy wasn't a typical girl. She didn't enjoy baking or household chores. She wasn't handy with a needle and thread. She never said, "I think so," or "Perhaps, if you think it best," or "Yes, dear, whatever you decide." And she hated to wear frilly dresses.

Lucy was a strong woman. She made her way in the world as well as any man. When she wrestled with her brothers, she left them lying in the mud. She pitched hay and built fences. She raced horses and hunted game. She said, "Yes, that's what we'll do," and "Trust me, I'll get it done," and "That's my decision and I'm sticking to it."

She was a force to be reckoned with.

Lucy was smitten with Samuel. She felt that he would make a fine husband and good father. Thus she was disappointed with her father's decision.

"Father," she said, "Samuel is a good man. I want him to court me."

"Daughter," said Amos, "I've already said no."

"I've decided to marry him, Father."

"Not while you live under my roof, Daughter."

"Thank you for making it plain, Father."

"Then you'll obey me and not see Samuel?"

"No, Father. I'll move from under your roof."

Lucy saddled her horse and rode to Samuel's farm. After discussing their situation, they decided to elope that very afternoon. In a buggy, they drove to New York State and found a justice of the peace to do the honors.

Then the newly married couple headed back to Canaan, imagining their life together.

"I hope you realize that no man will ever tell me what to do," Lucy said aloud.

“My dear,” responded Samuel, “every husband must set the rules of his household.”

“You can set all the rules you want. Just don’t expect me to follow them.”

“How will we get along together?” he asked.

“It will be best if I make the rules and you follow them,” she answered.

“Is that fair?”

“I’m as strong as you are,” she said. “I can run the farm as well as you can. Why shouldn’t I rule our roost?”

Samuel had an idea. “Let’s have a contest of strength when we get home. If you win, you’ll be in charge. If I win, the rules are mine.”

“Agreed,” said Lucy with a smile.

When they arrived home, Samuel tossed a long rope over the roof of his barn. One end hung down on the barn’s right side. The other hung down on the left.

“You pull down from one side and I’ll pull down from the other,” he explained. “Whoever pulls the entire rope over the barn is the strongest. Do you agree, my love?”

“Yes, Samuel, I agree.”

They took their places, and on his signal they began to pull. Lucy pulled with all her might and failed to yank the rope over to her side. Samuel pulled with all his strength and failed as well. Neither could best the other. The rope still straddled the barn’s roof.

“Now, dear wife,” hollered Samuel, “come round to my side of the barn. I have something to show you.”

Lucy was curious, so she dropped her end of the rope and walked around to her husband.

He held out his end of the rope and said, “You grab hold as well. We’ll pull together.”

They did. The rope flew easily over the barn and piled at their feet.

“Let that be the way our house is run,” said Samuel. “Let’s pull together.”

Lucy smiled. “You are wise, husband mine.”

Working together, they prospered on the land, raised many fine children, and lived a long and happy life.

# Those Three Wishes

By Judith Gorog

No one ever said that Melinda Alice was nice. That wasn't the word used. No, she was clever, even witty. She was called—never to her face, however—Melinda Malice. Melinda Alice was clever and cruel. Her mother, when she thought about it all, hoped Melinda would grow out of it. To her father, Melinda's very good grades mattered.

It was Melinda Alice, back in the eighth grade, who had labeled the shy, myopic (nearsighted) new girl "Contamination" and was the first to pretend that anything or anyone touched by the new girl had to be cleaned, inoculated (vaccinated), or avoided. High school had merely given Melinda Alice greater scope for her talents.

The surprising thing about Melinda Alice was her power; no one trusted her, but no one avoided her either. She was always included, always in the middle. If you had seen her, pretty and witty, in the center of a group of students walking past your house, you'd have thought, "There goes a natural leader."

Melinda Alice had left for school early. She wanted to study alone in a quiet spot she had because there was going to be a big math test, and Melinda Alice was not prepared. That "A" mattered; so Melinda Alice walked to school alone, planning her studies. She didn't usually notice nature much, so she nearly stepped on a beautiful snail that was making its way across the sidewalk.

"Ugh. Yucky thing," thought Melinda Alice, then stopped. Not wanting to step on the snail accidentally was one thing, but now she lifted her shoe to crush it.

"Please don't," said the snail.

"Why not?" retorted Melinda Alice.

"I'll give you three wishes," replied the snail evenly.

"Agreed," said Melinda Alice. "My first wish is that my next," she paused a split second, "my next thousand wishes come true." She smiled triumphantly and opened her bag to take out a small notebook and pencil to keep track.

Melinda Alice was sure she heard the snail say, "What a clever girl," as it made it to the safety of an ivy bed beside the sidewalk.

During the rest of the walk to school, Melinda was occupied with wonderful ideas. She would have beautiful clothes. "Wish number two, that I will always be perfectly dressed," and she was just that. True, her new outfit was not a lot different from the one she had worn leaving the house, but that only meant that Melinda Alice liked her own taste.

After thinking awhile, she wrote, “Wish number three. I wish for pierced ears and small gold earrings.” Her father had not allowed Melinda to have pierced ears, but now she had them anyway. She felt her new earrings and shook her beautiful hair in delight. “I can have anything: stereo, tapes, TV videodisc, moped, car, anything! All my life!” She hugged her books to herself in delight.

By the time she reached school, Melinda was almost an altruist (person who helps others without expecting anything in return); she could wish for peace. Then she wondered, “Is the snail that powerful?” She felt her ears, looked at her perfect blouse, skirt, jacket, shoes. “I could make ugly people beautiful, cure cripples...” She stopped. The wave of altruism had washed past. “I could pay people back who deserve it!” Melinda Alice looked at the school, at all the kids. She had an enormous sense of power. “They all have to do what I want now.” She walked down the crowded halls to her locker. Melinda Alice could be sweet; she could be witty. She could—The bell rang for her homeroom. Melinda Alice stashed her books, slammed the locker shut, and just made it to her seat.

“Hey, Melinda Alice,” whispered Fred. “You know that big math test next period?”

“Oh no,” grimaced Melinda Alice. Her thoughts raced; “That stupid snail made me late and now I forgot to study.”

“I’ll blow it,” she groaned aloud. “I wish I were dead.”

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Student First and Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ Stu Perm ID \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_ Period \_\_\_\_\_

# Santa Clara Unified School District

## Winter

### 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Writing Prompt



### Response to Literature Writing Task

In this writing task you will write a Response to Literature essay that addresses **one** of the prompts below.

#### Checklist for your writing:

- Carefully read the prompt and choose **one** to address.
- Organize your essay with a strong introduction, body, and conclusion.
- Use specific evidence and examples from the story.
- Include commentary which explains how the evidence supports your thesis.
- Vary your sentences to make your writing interesting to read.
- Use appropriate tone and voice.
- Check for mistakes in grammar, spelling, punctuation, and sentence formation.
- Remember that essays do not simply retell the story.

#### **Prompts:**

Choose **one** of the following prompts for your essay:

#### **Prompt A**

**Explain how a character changes through the course of the story.**

**OR**

#### **Prompt B**

**Identify a theme in this story and explain how it connects to a character.**

Student First and Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ Stu Perm ID \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_ Period \_\_\_\_\_

Santa Clara Unified School District  
**Winter**  
8<sup>th</sup> Grade Writing Prompt



**Response to Expository Writing Task**

**For this task, write a Response to Expository essay.**

**Task Checklist:**

- Carefully read the article. Circle or underline information you believe to be important.
- Organize your essay to include a strong introduction, body, and conclusion.
- Your thesis should address the author's message or theme.
- Use specific details and examples to support your explanation of the author's message or theme.
- Include whether you agree or disagree with the author and explain why.
- Choose specific words that are appropriate for your audience and for the purpose of your essay.
- Vary your sentences to make your writing interesting to read.
- Use appropriate tone and voice.
- Reread your essay to check for mistakes in grammar, spelling, punctuation, and sentence structure.

## Why Teens Love to Spend

by Mark David Peters

Teens are one of the worst age groups when it comes to managing money. Ask any teenager what they want to do with the money they earn from their job, and most will tell you that they want to spend it. For some, this is mostly electronic equipment such as consoles and computer games. For others, it's mainly clothes and music.

Very few will say that they are saving a portion of their income for their future, because when you are young it's simply much more fun to spend it rather than save it. Unfortunately for many teenagers, this can create a disastrous financial mindset which they carry on with them into adult life.

Only this time things start to get more serious, because the items they now want to buy are a lot bigger and cost a lot more than they did when they were younger. As a result, many adults get themselves heavily into debt, simply because they picked up bad financial habits when they were younger.

There are two main reasons why teens tend to be bad at managing their money. The first is the lack of financial education they receive at school. Whilst most teenagers will learn about science, art and history, very few will learn even basic economics. As a result, money is seen simply as something to spend on the items you want right now, rather than saving some away for your future.

The second major reason why this age group is so bad at managing their finances is due to the media, advertising and their peer group. Today millions of dollars are spent on advertising campaigns, specifically designed to get you to buy the product you see on TV or in a magazine.

As a result a lot of teens fall into the trap of thinking that they need to buy something, because it will either enhance their life in some way, or raise their social status amongst their peer group.

Clothes are a good example of this. Expensive designer clothes are seen as being highly desirable to youngsters, simply because they feel it will make them look "cool" or make others look up to them. Unfortunately, these designer clothes are also very expensive, which means once you fall into this trap your finances are going to drain very quickly.

So if you are a teen reading this, it is very important to understand that society is encouraging you to spend your money and not save it. Whilst this may seem like fun now, it could very easily result in you developing unhealthy financial habits that could result in you being very poor when you are older.

This is why it is important to start educating yourself about financial matters as early as possible, so that you don't fall into the money trap but instead learn to take proactive steps to protect your financial future.