

NWSS School Wide Reads

Sample Thinking Prompts and Tasks (including text titles)

ENGLISH 8 & 9:

Think: The article “The Lie” tells us that most “lies are of the white kind, doing nobody harm and generally making life far easier than it would be if we all knew what was going on. Other lies are more important, actually having a distinct purpose.” Scott Young, father of Canadian rock icon, Neil Young, describes a circumstance when he lied as a boy in the memoir, “A Christmas Without Patches”.

Task: Using information in “The Lie” as your guide, label Young’s lie and support your choice. Does he exhibit any of the signs of lying mentioned in the article? Do you understand and accept Young’s motivation for lying or do you reject it? Be sure to explain and support your response with references from both texts.

“The Lie” adapted from: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/h2g2/A664021>

Think: While there are similarities between Rosa Parks and Nelson Mandela, in fact some use their names virtually interchangeably, they have many significant dissimilarities. Read the articles “Why Do You Push Us Around”, and “I Have Crossed Famous Rivers” to learn more about Rosa Parks and Nelson Mandela.

Task: Discuss the similarities and differences between Rosa Parks and Nelson Mandela. Be sure to explain and support your response with references from both texts.

Think: Many events in modern life create stress. None of us escapes stress completely, but we can learn to deal with it effectively. Read the story “A New Year’s Story” and the article “Coping Strategies for Family Stress” to learn more.

Task: Describe the difficulties the community faces in “A New Year’s Story”. What strategies from the article “Coping with Stress” do the people in the story use? What other strategies from the article could they have used? Be sure to explain and support your response with references from both texts.

Heynen, Jim. “A New Year’s Story”. *The Boy’s House*. 61-65.
ISBN: 0-87351-413-0

<http://www.fcs.msue.msu.edu/ff/pdf/files/familystress3.pdf>

ENGLISH 10 / COMMUNICATIONS 11 & 12

Think: The ration of time children spend in structured and unstructured activities can have a significant impact on many areas of their development. Read the story “Stone=Throw” and the article “Structured and Unstructured Time” to learn more.

Task: What would Sasha’s father in “Stone=Throw” think of the points made in the article “Structured and Unstructured Time”? Be sure to clearly explain and support your response with reference to both texts.

Aronson, Marc. “Stone=Throw.” *Guys Write For Guys Read*. Ed. Jon Scieszka. Toronto: Penguin, 2005. 24-26

<http://www.post-gazette.com/lifestyle/20021001childsplay1001fnp3.asp>

Think: Wes Carter is an African-American and Joy Kogawa is a Japanese-Canadian; despite living in different countries, both have endured prejudice.

Task: At the end of “The Newspapers Tell Only Half the Story” Carter concludes that “To think beyond race is commendable; to act beyond race is to take a real step toward a more equal society”. What would Carter’s reaction be to the article “Non-profit Leads Fight to Save Kogawa Home”?

“The Newspapers Tell Only Half the Story” (Newsweek: My Turn, January 13, 2003)

“Non-profit Leads Fight to Save Kogawa Home” (Vancouver Sun; E3, 31 Dec.’05)?

Think: Clothing, especially clothing bearing a “brand”, can have significant appeal for all consumers, especially teens. Read the story “Let’s Go to the Videotape” and the article “The Teen Scene” to learn more.

Task: What would the narrator in “Let’s Go to the Videotape” think of the points made in the article “The Teen Scene”? Be sure to clearly explain and support your response with reference to both texts.

Guzman, Dan. “Let’s Go to the Videotape”. *Guys Write For Guys Read*. Ed. Jon Scieszka. Toronto: Penguin, 2005. 100-104

“The Teen Scene”: <http://www.cottoninc.com/lsmarticles/?articleID=181>

English 11 and 12

Think: With graduation approaching, many senior students struggle with the question of what to do after high-school. Most will consider some form of post-secondary education, but on what basis will that critical decision be made? Read the story “Unforgettable Miss Bessie” and the article “Value of a College Degree” to learn more.

Task: Describe the values Miss Bessie finds in education. How would she respond to the points made in the article “The Value of a College Degree”? Be sure to clearly explain and support your response with reference to both texts.

Rowan, Carl T. “Unforgettable Miss Bessie”.
<http://www.ericdigest.org/2003-3/value.htm>

Think: E-mail has changed the way we communicate, but like any significant change, it has created a number of issues that need to be thought through. Read the article “To: Professor@University.edu Subject: Why It’s All About Me,” and the responses to that article “Students E-Mail the Oddest Things (10 Letters)” to learn more about how e-mail has affected communication.

Task: E-mail is disrupting the traditional relationships between professors and their students. **Detail** these changes and then **select** one of the 10 letters that most closely parallels your own views. **Explain** your views and **discuss** the insights into e-mail communication the letter you selected provides.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/02/21/education/21professors.html>

Think: Zoos began as menageries by aristocrats and have evolved dramatically since then, into places like the world famous San Diego Zoo and Sea World. While enormously successful, they are controversial. Are they sanctuaries for threatened species or glorified prisons? Read the excerpt from Yann Martel’s *The Life of Pi* and “A Prison by any Other Name” by Bill Travers to learn more.

Task: According to the excerpt from *The Life of Pi*, describe the narrator’s opinion of zoos and the lives of animals in captivity. How would he respond to Bill Travers’ argument in “A Prison by any Other Name”?

Martel, Yann. *Life of Pi*. Canada: Random House, 2001. 16-27.
Adapted from: <http://www.justiceforanimals.co.za/animals-zoos.html>