

## **Constructed Response**

### **Activity 3:**

Using the prompt you selected in Activity 1, write a scoring guide that addresses evaluative criteria, has quality descriptors, and specifies analytic or holistic application.

See Practice Passages for Constructive Responses  
From WritingFix, grades 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, high school  
[http://writingfix.com/RICA/constructed\\_response.htm](http://writingfix.com/RICA/constructed_response.htm)

### **Writing Effective Prompts**

Writing an effective essay prompt requires equal shares of art and science. The prompt must allow room for creative interpretation and analysis. However, the prompt must also provide organization and boundaries for the writers' responses.

1. The prompt should be brief. Wordiness only serves to confuse the writer.
2. The prompt should be focused. A prompt that rambles in an attempt to explain or motivate is counter-productive.
3. The prompt should require only the prior knowledge that has been emphasized in class instruction. Isolate the variables of personal experience to best assess the outcomes of instruction.
4. The prompt should be age-appropriate. Know the developmental capabilities and interests of your students and translate these into the writing prompt.
5. The prompt should avoid issues which students or parents would find objectionable. Save the PG-13 issues for older students. Don't let the subject interfere with the writing task.
6. The prompt should not be so personal that the privacy of the writer is jeopardized. A writing prompt should not inhibit the writer from answering honestly and comfortably.
7. The prompt should not embarrass the gender, ethnicity, or socio-economic background of the writer. Stay sensitive to these variables within your classroom. Words have different meanings according to one's perspective.
8. The prompt should allow students of varying abilities to respond effectively. An ideal prompt allows all students to experience success in their writing.
9. The prompt should be interesting enough to motivate the writer. A prompt that does not provoke thought will reap a thoughtless response.
10. The prompt should allow "room to breathe" for divergent thinkers. Expect the unexpected in student responses, and design prompts to allow for a variety of responses.
11. The prompt should enable the writer to respond with a thesis that states the purpose of the writing and/or the author's point of view. If you can't turn the writing prompt into a thesis statement without effort, your students will never accomplish this task.
12. The prompt should not artificially force the writer into a certain thesis. A one-sided prompt that demands a certain thesis will not produce original thought.

13. The prompt can provide a writing situation to set the writing directions in context. However, the writing situation should not overwhelm or confuse the writing instructions.

14. The prompt should have clear writing instructions. Writers are the best judges as to whether the prompt has clear instructions. Avoid vocabulary and terms that will confuse the students. Don't use writing direction words, such as "analyze", if your students do not understand them.

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