

English II Writing Expository Prompt

Read the following quotation.

Weeds are flowers too, once you get to know them.
—A. A. Milne

First impressions can sometimes be misleading. Think carefully about this statement.

Write an essay explaining the importance of getting to know people before forming an opinion about them.

Be sure to —

- clearly state your thesis
- organize and develop your ideas effectively
- choose your words carefully
- edit your writing for grammar, mechanics, and spelling

Score Point 1

The essay represents a very limited writing performance.

Organization/Progression

- ❑ The organizing structure of the essay is inappropriate to the purpose or the specific demands of the prompt. The writer uses organizational strategies that are only marginally suited to the explanatory task, or they are inappropriate or not evident at all. The absence of a functional organizational structure causes the essay to lack clarity and direction.
- ❑ Most ideas are generally related to the topic specified in the prompt, but the thesis statement is missing, unclear, or illogical. The writer may fail to maintain focus on the topic, may include extraneous information, or may shift abruptly from idea to idea, weakening the coherence of the essay.
- ❑ The writer's progression of ideas is weak. Repetition or wordiness sometimes causes serious disruptions in the flow of the essay. At other times the lack of transitions and sentence-to-sentence connections causes the writer to present ideas in a random or illogical way, making one or more parts of the essay unclear or difficult to follow.

Development of Ideas

- ❑ The development of ideas is weak. The essay is ineffective because the writer uses details and examples that are inappropriate, vague, or insufficient.
- ❑ The essay is insubstantial because the writer's response to the prompt is vague or confused. In some cases, the essay as a whole is only weakly linked to the prompt. In other cases, the writer develops the essay in a manner that demonstrates a lack of understanding of the expository writing task.

Use of Language/Conventions

- ❑ The writer's word choice may be vague or limited. It reflects little or no awareness of the expository purpose and does not establish a tone appropriate to the task. The word choice may impede the quality and clarity of the essay.
- ❑ Sentences are simplistic, awkward, or uncontrolled, significantly limiting the effectiveness of the essay.
- ❑ The writer has little or no command of sentence boundaries and spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and usage conventions. Serious and persistent errors create disruptions in the fluency of the writing and sometimes interfere with meaning.

First impressions can be very misleading on a person attitude and character. It is always important when you meet some one that you leave a good impression on someone. Make them want to come around you again make them enjoy your presence.

When you meet some body dont be so quick to judge them by if there hot, skinny, tall, short, not athletic but especially do not judge some body on what you have heard about that one individall. Give them a churces to prove these rumors and misleading information you her about them wrong.

So what I'm saying is dont judge a book by it's cover just because its a little bagged up take the time to atleast read the first page and give it a churce.

Score Point 1

The writer begins the essay by trying to explain how first impressions can be misleading. The writer attempts to develop this idea by providing a hypothetical example. However, the development is vague, impeding the clarity of the essay. The writer then switches to a discussion about judging others before getting to know them. This abrupt shift in focus weakens the coherence of the essay. In addition, serious and persistent errors in grammar, spelling, and usage create disruptions in the fluency of the writing.

Score Point 2

The essay represents a basic writing performance.

Organization/Progression

- ❑ The organizing structure of the essay is evident but may not always be appropriate to the purpose or the specific demands of the prompt. The essay is not always clear because the writer uses organizational strategies that are only somewhat suited to the expository task.
- ❑ Most ideas are generally related to the topic specified in the prompt, but the writer’s thesis statement is weak or somewhat unclear. The lack of an effective thesis or the writer’s inclusion of irrelevant information interferes with the focus and coherence of the essay.
- ❑ The writer’s progression of ideas is not always logical and controlled. Sometimes repetition or wordiness causes minor disruptions in the flow of the essay. At other times transitions and sentence-to-sentence connections are too perfunctory or weak to support the flow of the essay or show the relationships among ideas.

Development of Ideas

- ❑ The development of ideas is minimal. The essay is superficial because the writer uses details and examples that are not always appropriate or are too briefly or partially presented.
- ❑ The essay reflects little or no thoughtfulness. The writer’s response to the prompt is sometimes formulaic. The writer develops the essay in a manner that demonstrates only a limited understanding of the expository writing task.

Use of Language/Conventions

- ❑ The writer’s word choice may be general or imprecise. It reflects a basic awareness of the expository purpose but does little to establish a tone appropriate to the task. The word choice may not contribute to the quality and clarity of the essay.
- ❑ Sentences are awkward or only somewhat controlled, weakening the effectiveness of the essay.
- ❑ The writer demonstrates a partial command of sentence boundaries and spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and usage conventions. Some distracting errors may be evident, at times creating minor disruptions in the fluency or meaning of the writing.

Score Point 3

The essay represents a satisfactory writing performance.

Organization/Progression

- The organizing structure of the essay is, for the most part, appropriate to the purpose and responsive to the specific demands of the prompt. The essay is clear because the writer uses organizational strategies that are adequately suited to the expository task.
- The writer establishes a clear thesis statement. Most ideas are related to the thesis and are focused on the topic specified in the prompt. The essay is coherent, though it may not always be unified due to minor lapses in focus.
- The writer's progression of ideas is generally logical and controlled. For the most part, transitions are meaningful, and sentence-to-sentence connections are sufficient to support the flow of the essay and show the relationships among ideas.

Development of Ideas

- The development of ideas is sufficient because the writer uses details and examples that are specific and appropriate, adding some substance to the essay.
- The essay reflects some thoughtfulness. The writer's response to the prompt is original rather than formulaic. The writer develops the essay in a manner that demonstrates a good understanding of the expository writing task.

Use of Language/Conventions

- The writer's word choice is, for the most part, clear and specific. It reflects an awareness of the expository purpose and establishes a tone appropriate to the task. The word choice usually contributes to the quality and clarity of the essay.
- Sentences are varied and adequately controlled, for the most part contributing to the effectiveness of the essay.
- The writer demonstrates an adequate command of sentence boundaries and spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and usage conventions. Although some errors may be evident, they create few (if any) disruptions in the fluency of the writing, and they do not affect the clarity of the essay.

Score Point 4

The essay represents an accomplished writing performance.

Organization/Progression

- The organizing structure of the essay is clearly appropriate to the purpose and responsive to the specific demands of the prompt. The essay is skillfully crafted because the writer uses organizational strategies that are particularly well suited to the expository task.
- The writer establishes a clear thesis statement. All ideas are strongly related to the thesis and are focused on the topic specified in the prompt. By sustaining this focus, the writer is able to create an essay that is unified and coherent.
- The writer's progression of ideas is logical and well controlled. Meaningful transitions and strong sentence-to-sentence connections enhance the flow of the essay by clearly showing the relationships among ideas, making the writer's train of thought easy to follow.

Development of Ideas

- The development of ideas is effective because the writer uses details and examples that are specific and well chosen, adding substance to the essay.
- The essay is thoughtful and engaging. The writer may choose to use his/her unique experiences or view of the world as a basis for writing or to connect ideas in interesting ways. The writer develops the essay in a manner that demonstrates a thorough understanding of the expository writing task.

Use of Language/Conventions

- The writer's word choice is purposeful and precise. It reflects a keen awareness of the expository purpose and maintains a tone appropriate to the task. The word choice strongly contributes to the quality and clarity of the essay.
- Sentences are purposeful, varied, and well controlled, enhancing the effectiveness of the essay.
- The writer demonstrates a consistent command of sentence boundaries and spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and usage conventions. Although minor errors may be evident, they do not detract from the fluency of the writing or the clarity of the essay. The overall strength of the conventions contributes to the effectiveness of the essay.

She has bleached blonde hair, an extraordinary personality, head cheerleader, and is dating the captain of the football team. She seems to have it all, but almost everyone's, probably even yours, first assumption about her is that she is dumb. Before she even opens her mouth you've probably assumed that whatever it is that she's going to say isn't going to be very intelligent. The reality is though that she's third in her class, and far more intelligent than you.

Everyone does this whether it is about the cheerleader in high school or your next door neighbor. We create stereotypical assumptions about someone's character without even bothering to get the full story first. We all should make an effort to actually get to know someone first. The smart cheerleader that keeps getting called dumb probably has her feelings hurt more than anyone can imagine.

It is important, and we owe it to the people we come in contact with to get to know them first. You can kill a reputation by making assumptions about someone based on what you see and what you hear.

Score Point 4

In this accomplished writing performance, the writer establishes the clear thesis that “we owe it to the people we come in contact with to get to know them first.” In the first paragraph, the writer uses a hypothetical cheerleader example to support her thesis. The writer then widens the scope of her observations to the world outside of high school and reminds the reader that on some level everyone makes assumptions based on stereotypes. Word choice is purposeful and precise, and a strong expository tone is evident throughout the essay. The writer’s perceptive insights add to the depth and effectiveness of the response. Because every sentence contributes to the development of the writer’s explanation, the essay is tightly focused, making it both unified and coherent.

Her face displayed an awkward, sarcastic expression more often than not. She seemed taciturn and unsociable. Nevertheless, when a group project forced us to work together, I began to know and appreciate a girl whom I could well understand and enjoy. Although she overcame her dispiriting pessimism so this day, the uncertain intimidation dissolved into friendship as I began to know her better. Like in my case, truly knowing people before forming opinions about them offers an individual and more accurate understanding of the person.

Interestingly, Harper Lee's To Kill a Mockingbird presents the difference in actually understanding people rather than forming preconceived opinions in a conversation between Atticus Finch and his daughter, Scout. For the first time, Scout has met a man known as Boo Radley, commonly rumored to be evil and scary. After meeting a kind and kind Boo, however, Scout tells her father of how nice Boo had been. Wistfully, Atticus responds to his daughter that "most people are [evil] in other [a person's] eyes than know them." Atticus understands the importance of knowing people before establishing pre-conceived notions, and Scout learns of the difference in a first impression formed by rumor versus a more accurate, informed opinion. Thus, father and daughter see the importance of assessing people honestly rather than relying on rumors.

Marie Perle follows Johnson's book The Little Colonel's House Party shows the similar story of judging people based on appearance. When Betty, an orphan who lives on a poor farm, arrives at Lloyd's house, Lloyd forms a bleak outlook on her guest based on the girl's countenanced appearance in Lloyd's affluent, late nineteenth century town. As Lloyd begins to witness Betty's simple, gentle sweetness, however, she grows to love and respect her unexpected guest. By opening her mind to look past her friend's usual appearance, Lloyd realizes the true value of his new friend.

Although people generally form first impressions, a more complete understanding comes from truly getting to know a person.

Score Point 4

This thoughtful, engaging response begins with the portrait of a girl who seems "taciturn and unsociable" but becomes the writer's friend after his first impressions are set aside. This personal anecdote supports the thesis that getting to know and understand a person yields the most accurate impression. The writer adds substance to the response with well-chosen examples and specific details from novels. The transition the writer uses in the first sentence of paragraph 3 provides a meaningful connection between Scout in *To Kill a Mockingbird* and Lloyd in *The Little Colonel's House Party*, both of whom learn that there is a difference between initial impressions and "a more accurate, informed opinion." In addition, the writer's word choice reflects a keen awareness of the expository purpose and maintains a tone appropriate to the task.

First impressions can often be misleading, and one should get to know people before forming an opinion about them because it may change over time.

People do not show their true self when they meet a person for the first time, because they are unsure of what the other person is like. They often act more politely and maturely, with some tension. After people get to know each other, they tend to relax more and reveal themselves little by little. They may reveal a great characteristic, such as great humor or outgoingness, or they may reveal some flaws, such as dishonesty. These things can't be seen from the outside, so they can't be judged right away.

An example of this is food. If you've never tried a type of food before, you judge it by color, ingredients, texture, and overall appearance. You may think that fish are disgusting, but once you try it you may find that it actually tastes good. There might be a large, red, delicious looking strawberry, but once you take a bite, you may realize that it is sour and unappetizing.

Every thing has many layers to it, and humans have more layers than other things. They are far more sophisticated than food, or sports. It takes longer to peel back the layers to get to the truth, which may be completely different from their facades. It may take months, or maybe years to get there, so first impressions can't always be taken for the whole, because you only see the thick outer layer at first.

Score Point 4

This accomplished writing performance is centered on the thesis that hasty conclusions about a person are misleading and "may change over time." The development is effective because specific, well-chosen examples explain how initial meetings are marked by uncertainty, but as people gradually get to know one another, true personalities are revealed. The writer connects ideas in an unusual, but interesting, way by comparing this process to trying new food or unpeeling the layers of something "to get to the truth." Meaningful sentence-to-sentence connections enhance the flow of the essay by clearly showing the relationships among ideas, making the writer's train of thought easy to follow. In addition, the sentences are varied and purposeful. Overall, the writer develops the essay in a manner that demonstrates a thorough understanding of the expository writing task.

In sixth grade, I had a class with a boy named Joseph. He had glasses, and his voice sounded funny, so at first I steered clear of him. Then it occurred to me that I have my own shortcomings, and that judging Joseph based on a hazy glance was unfair. Today, the two of us are best friends, all because I decided to be open-minded. Often times when people judge a book by its cover, they end up missing a potential opportunity for an infinity of profit, just because of close-mindedness. Therefore, it is important that people put away their inclinations and interact with others before condemning them.

A first impression is just that—a first impression. It doesn't reveal any definitive qualities of a person, aside from a few superficial ones. People who use first impressions to discern between favorable and unfavorable relationships are only limiting themselves. They close doors that could lead to multitudinous opportunities for positive spheres of influence and happiness. Only when one is enlightened on the benefits of open-mindedness will he or she begin to take a closer look at people. Such benefits include lifelong friendships, helpful information, and chances to advance society through the connections shared with people. All this can be unlocked just by unlocking one's mind and allowing it to be independent of all prejudice.

That book that is judged by its cover and left on the shelf could have been the answer to that naive person's problems. I don't know where I would be or what state I would be in if I had decided to leave Joseph the "nerd" be. Don't knock it until you try it, they say, because you never know the gain you can attain just by opening that book.

Score Point 4

In this accomplished writing performance, the writer skillfully crafts the essay by framing a philosophical discussion with a personal anecdote. The development of the essay is focused on a thesis asserting that first impressions do not reveal a person's true self. The writer is able to connect his ideas in interesting ways because he uses his view of the world as a basis for writing. The writer's purposeful and concrete word choice is specific and reflects a thorough understanding of the expository writing task. In addition, the overall strength of the conventions strongly contributes to the effectiveness of the essay.