

Prompts for Reading Bank

Jimmy Santiago Baca "Coming into Language"

In "Coming into Language," Jimmy Santiago Baca describes the process by which he learned how to read and write. How did Baca's discoveries of both reading and writing change him? Do you believe that reading and writing usually make this kind of significant difference in people's lives? Please use examples from Baca's essay and your own observations and experiences to support your ideas. Be sure to give your essay a title of its own.

Ed Carson "Purging Bingeing"

According to Ed Carson in "Purging Bingeing," what are the dangers of heavy drinking among college students? In your experience, is Carson's assessment of the drinking habits of college students accurate? Illustrate your answer with examples from your own observations and experiences. Be sure to give your essay a title of its own.

Sandra Cisneros "Only Daughter"

In "Only Daughter," Sandra Cisneros writes about a conflict between her father's expectations and her own interests and goals. Describe this conflict, and explain how Cisneros resolves it within the context of her family as well as outside of it. How does her experience of family expectations compare with your own? Use examples from the text and from your own knowledge, observations, and experience to support your ideas. Be sure to give your essay a title of its own.

Norman Cousins "The Decline of Neatness"

In "The Decline of Neatness," Norman Cousins argues that people's casual style of dressing reflects a deeper attitude toward human relationships and society. What is his argument? Do you agree or disagree with him? Use examples from the text and from your own knowledge, observations, and experience to support your ideas. Be sure to give your essay a title of its own.

Rose Del Castillo Guilbault "Americanization is Tough on 'Macho'"

In "Americanization is Tough on 'Macho,'" Rose Del Castillo Guilbault explains how the word "macho" is defined differently in the United States versus Mexico. In a well developed essay, explain both of Guilbault's definitions and how your definition of "macho" compares with hers. Support your ideas with your own examples as well as with examples from the text. Be sure to give your essay a title of its own.

Lars Eighner "My Daily Dives in the Dumpster"

In "My Daily Dives in the Dumpster," Lars Eighner describes his practice of "scavenging" from garbage bins. In a well-developed essay, identify what you think Eighner's main point is, and discuss how his essay challenges certain assumptions you or others may make about people who survive on other people's garbage. Support your ideas with your own examples as well as with examples from the text. Be sure to give your essay a title of its own.

Zora Neale Hurston

"How It Feels To Be Colored Me"

Zora Neale Hurston's essay explores what it means to her to be an African American before the age of thirteen and after she moves from Eatonville. How does it feel to be "colored me," according to Hurston? Analyze the different perspectives from which she looks at her identity and discuss Hurston's attitude about herself as a person of color. You may call upon your own experiences, observations, and other appropriate reading to analyze her changing sense of herself as an African American.

Alfred Lubrano

"Bricklayer's Boy"

In "Bricklayer's Boy," Alfred Lubrano describes how his career choice affects his relationship with his father. In a well-developed essay, explain how the author's values differ from his father's, and describe how your own experience of growing up and forming your own identity as separate from your parents compares with Lubrano's experience. Support your ideas with your own examples as well as with examples from the text. Be sure to give your essay a title of its own.

Peggy Noonan

"Why the World Comes Here"

According to Peggy Noonan's essay "Why the World Comes Here," what are the advantages of living in America? To what extent do you agree or disagree with her main point? To support your position, you may use examples from Noonan's essay and your own experiences and observations. Be sure to give your essay a title of its own.

Luis Rodriguez

"La Vida Loca"

According to Luis Rodriguez in his essay "La Vida Loca," what are the causes of youth rebellion? Write an essay in which you explain his analysis. To what extent do you agree or disagree with his analysis and why? Support your answer with examples from the text and also from your own experience and observations. Be sure to give your essay a title of its own.

Richard Rodriguez

From Hunger for Memory

Describe the impact of formal education on Richard Rodriguez's life, specifically how his education affected his relationship with his family. Do you agree with Rodriguez that the pursuit of education can affect students' relations with their families? To develop your essay, be sure to discuss specific examples from Rodriguez's essay. If you choose, you may also refer to your own experiences and your observations of others. Be sure to give your essay a title of its own.

Scott Russell Sanders

"The Men We Carry In Our Minds"

In "The Men We Carry In Our Minds," Scott Russell Sanders describes the work of men in the working class. Identify some of the differences in the lives of fathers and mothers he noticed when he was growing up. Do you agree with Sanders when he suggests that men have harder working lives than women do? Use examples from the text and from your own knowledge, observations, and experience to support your ideas. Be sure to give your essay a title of its own.

Mary Sherry

"In Praise of the F Word"

In her essay, "In Praise of the F Word," Mary Sherry claims that fear of failure can motivate students. Write an essay in which you explain her argument and offer your own opinion about her position on flunking students who have not mastered the course material. Support your answer with examples from the text and from your own observations and experiences. Be sure to give your essay a title of its own.

Roger Sipher

"So That Nobody Has to Go to School If They Don't Want To"

In his essay Sipher argues that formal education for everyone has not worked in this country. Write an essay in which you first summarize his reasons for taking this position. Then explain why you agree or disagree with his views, using evidence from Sipher's essay, as well as your own experiences and observations. Be sure to give your essay a title of its own.

Brent Staples

"Just Walk On By"

In his article "Just Walk On By," Brent Staples describes how various people react to him as an African American man and how those reactions affect him. Write an essay in which you explain why, according to Staples, people fear and suspect him. To what extent do you sympathize with Staples and/or with the pedestrians who encounter him on the streets? Use examples from the text and from your own observations and experience to develop the ideas in your essay. Be sure to give your essay a title of its own.

Amy Tan

"Mother Tongue"

In what ways does Amy Tan challenge the common assumptions about people who do not speak "good" or "standard" English? Do you think Tan is right to challenge those common views? Using examples from Tan's essay and your own experiences or observations, discuss your own reaction to people who speak "broken" English. Be sure to give your essay a title of its own.

Deborah Tannen

"And Rarely the Twain Shall Meet"

In her essay "And Rarely the Twain Shall Meet," Deborah Tannen discusses gender differences in speech and claims men and women have noticeably different styles of communicating. What are some of the differences Tannen observes? Based on your own experiences and observations, how accurate do you think her claims are? Be sure to give your essay a title of its own.

Alice Walker "Am I Blue"

In "Am I Blue," Alice Walker writes about her experience with a horse named Blue. Explain what purpose you think Walker had in mind when she wrote this essay. To what extent do you agree or disagree with her opinion? Use examples from the text and from your own knowledge, observations and experience to support your ideas. Be sure to give your essay a title of its own.

Marie Winn's "Television Addiction" and Madeline Drexler's "Don't Touch That Dial"

In her essay, Marie Winn argues that extended viewing of television is a serious addiction. Madeline Drexler, on the other hand, refutes the evidence that television viewing is harmful, focusing her attention especially on children who watch TV. Why does Winn regard heavy TV viewing as a destructive addiction? What arguments does Drexler present in support of TV? Last, using the ideas in the two essays as well as your own experiences and observations, explain whether you think TV viewing has a positive or negative effect on viewers' lives. Be sure to give your essay a title of its own.