



Tips for Timed Writing Foundation Lesson

Skill Focus

Levels of Thinking				
Remember	Understand	Apply	Analyze	Create
Close Reading		Grammar		Composition
Reading Strategies Annotation				Types (modes) Expository analytical Persuasive (argumentative) The Process of Composition Prewriting consideration of audience determination of purpose generation of ideas organization of ideas Drafting timed Structural Elements Introduction thesis Body use of commentary use of evidence Conclusion

Lesson Introduction

One of the most important skills a student can develop in an English class that incorporates Pre-AP strategies is a facility in addressing writing topics under time pressure. In middle school, these practice timed writings can be only a few paragraphs long, focused on limited analytical topics. For example, instead of asking middle school students to examine diction, imagery, detail, point of view, syntax, tone, and theme in reference to a selected passage, ask them to look only at imagery and its relation to tone and theme. Middle schoolers can write essays that range from one or more paragraphs at the beginning of the year to multi-paragraph, multi-page essays in the middle or at the end of the year. High school students can begin with analytical or persuasive paragraphs if they are inexperienced writers, but they should be able to progress throughout the year to writing multi-paragraph, multi-page essays that address a complex topic.

The student activity can be “talked through” initially, then used as a resource for students while they are completing timed writings in class.

Composition



Tips for Timed Writing Foundation Lesson

Use this sheet as a reminder while you are writing.

Note the start and end time at the top of the page.

- Spend at least half of the allotted time on analyzing the prompt, reading the passage, and planning the essay.

Read the prompt carefully.

For literary analysis questions:

- Identify the abstract concept that is the focus of the prompt. Circle it.
- Identify any concrete devices the prompt specifies or suggests you use. Underline them.

For open-ended persuasive questions:

- Identify the topic. Underline it.
- Brainstorm for pros and cons.
- Support with links to literature and history where possible.

For open-ended “link to other work” questions:

- Identify the “link” (i.e., theme, character, setting). Circle it.
- Underline each task the prompt requires.
- Brainstorm for a personal list of works before looking at a provided list.

Read the passage for understanding.

- Ask yourself who, what, when, where, and why questions if necessary.
- Keep the prompt in mind as you read.

For literary analysis questions, reread and mark the passage.

- Focus on concrete devices that create the abstract concept.
- Jot notes in the margins as you read. You may forget some of the points you want to make if you don't. These notes may be all of the prewriting you have time to do.

Write a concise introduction that answers the question.

- ATTT – Include the author, title, type of selection, and time period information in the introduction. This information is given in the prompt.
- AQA – Answer the question asked. Your thesis should answer the question, not just restate the prompt. Do not be afraid to state the obvious.



Focus on your commentary.

- Your insight and understanding of the literature, as well as how you make the connections called for in the prompt, are what the reader will evaluate.
- You do not have to follow the eleven-sentence, five-paragraph essay structure, but be sure to balance evidence with interpretation, and develop the body of your essay fully.
- Make sure you answer the question! Focus on the prompt. Remember, with literary analysis you must explain how or why the concrete elements create or illustrate the abstract concept.

Your conclusion must be worth reading.

- Do not repeat what has already been stated in the essay.
- Your conclusion should reflect an understanding of the passage, the question, and the author's craft.
- Be sure to address theme, or meaning, in your conclusion. Try to find a universal element or truth that relates to the passage or prompt and ties it all together.