

WRITING SAMPLE

Because clear and correct writing is essential to success in college, the University expects entering students to be able to write essays that are coherent, thoughtful, and relatively error-free. Entering students are asked to write a sample essay on a given topic that demonstrates these qualities. Writing an essay of this kind is not something for which you should make special preparations, although the more you practice writing both in-class and out-of-class essay the better your score should be. Writing as well as you can in the time allowed will help the University make an accurate assessment of your writing ability. Entering transfer students who have completed a college-level composition course with a grade of D or better and who provide verification by official transcript prior to orientation will be exempt from taking the writing assessment.

You will have 50 minutes to write on an assigned topic. You will be in a classroom with other students and a student adviser. Your essay will be read and evaluated by at least two faculty readers. Faculty and student advisers will then interpret your essay score and use it together with your score on the SAT II: Writing Test (if provided) as a basis for advising you with respect to the General Education Writing Requirement and other writing courses. Following is an example of a general education writing sample:

As an entering student, you are required to complete this writing sample. It will be used by your adviser to ensure that you are placed in an appropriate writing course.

Directions:

You will have 50 minutes to plan and write the essay assigned below. Before you begin writing, read the passage carefully and organize your thoughts about the topic. Write only on this topic; an essay on another topic will not be acceptable. Please write in ink on the attached paper. You should not skip lines. Your monitor has extra paper and pens if needed.

Be specific in your writing, using examples and details whenever appropriate. How well you write is more important than length for a timed essay, but you'll probably need to write more than a page or more than 2-3 paragraphs to do well on this topic. If you finish early, proofread your essay and make neat corrections as needed.

The Writing Topic:

Read the following paragraph written by John Ciardi and then write your essay in response to the topic below it.

We demand difficulty even in our games. We demand it because without difficulty there can be no game. A game is a way of making something hard for the fun of it. The Rules of the game are an arbitrary imposition of difficulty. When the spoilsport ruins the fun, he always does so by refusing to play by the rules, but the fun is in winning within the rules. No difficulty, no fun.

Think about a game you play that you enjoy. It might be a card game, a video game, a board game, a team or individual sport...any kind of game that has rules that should be followed to play the game well. Describe the game and how it is played, and then discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with Mr. Ciardi when he says "...but the fun is winning within the rules. No difficulty, no fun."