

General Writing Test Tips

- ❑ Get a good night's sleep (seven to eight hours) and a good breakfast in the morning
- ❑ Come prepared; have an open mind and two no. 2 pencils or a mechanical pencil with plenty of extra lead
- ❑ Review information provided by your English 10 teacher

Format Information

- ❑ The prompt may ask students to write a business letter, a speech, or an article addressing a community organization, other students, or an individual or business. Regardless of the audience, students should use formal English and avoid contractions and slang.
- ❑ For a business letter, students should address the audience and use a colon (e.g. **Dear Leesville Road Parents:**). Students should not worry about return and business addresses, as that information is not provided nor is there room to spare for it. Start your essay on the next line.
- ❑ For a speech, students should address the audience (**Good evening Wake County Public School Board,**). Once again, start your essay on the next line.
- ❑ An article should have an inviting opening to interest the reader. Using a quote or statistic provided on the prompt may help accomplish this goal if the student does not have another original idea.

During the Test

Plan accordingly; you have 100 minutes to complete the test.

- 1) **Prewriting** – Spend **15 to 20 minutes** planning your paper using either an outline or a web; be thorough and develop examples and details to support your observations about the writing topic.
- 2) **Rough Draft** – Spend **30 minutes** writing an organized rough draft on the paper given to you by the test administrator. Make sure your paper has an introduction, a thesis statement, topic sentences for each paragraph, and a conclusion that leaves the audience with a sense of closure.
- 3) **Revise/Edit** – Spend **15 to 20 minutes** revising and editing your paper, noting gaps in reasoning, lack of examples, and organization. Fix these problems making sure you are answering exactly what the writing prompt requests of you.
- 4) **Final Draft** – Write your final copy on the paper provided by the test administrator. This should take about **20 minutes**. Make sure your paper is neat and legible. Do not double stack lines or write beyond the stop sign.
- 5) **Proofread** – You should use the remaining **10 minutes** to read through your final draft for simple spelling and punctuation errors and make corrections.

Some students may choose to spend more time on their prewriting and go directly to the final draft. Just make sure your paper contains all the required elements listed in the rough draft section above.

Note these are only estimates, but if you stick close to the timeline, you should have plenty of time to finish the test!