

# Introductory Paragraphs

## Prompt #1A:

***Of all the animals in the world, which is your favorite and why?***

## Response #1A:

One might think the greyhound's graceful strides would give him an edge – or, the tremendous spring of the young joeys or mountain bucks would place either atop my list. Dare I claim the exotic stripes of the Serengeti's zebra, or the sleekness of the river boa? No! **My fancy must soar with utter ease through the ethereal plains and glide with never a flutter on the wings of the wind. Mine must spy on its prey from a lofty height and conquer it at will with a single dip. My favorite must epitomize raw power and embody the freedoms that can be purchased with it.** My favorite beast in all this world is the mighty bald eagle!

## Prompt #2A:

***What would you change if you could change anything in the world?***

## Response #2A:

No doubt the hunger pains of lonely children cry out to be eased; and, the undressed wounds of fallen soldiers lay open like unguarded doors, as the last of their precious blood escapes to the dust. So many things need to be changed. So many wrongs need to be made right. But, I am a single soul with the force of only one. I can't fix everything! But, if I could fix just one thing, it would be this: I would repair the cold, damaged hearts of those who hate others for no good reason at all! I am persuaded that *when haters stop hating, violent killers will also stop killing; armed robbers will stop robbing, and those who prey on our children* will learn to rue the thought of such a thing, seeing it as the abomination that it is.

## Prompt #3A:

***Tell which of your personal character traits is most important to you and explain why.***

## Response #3A:

It's been said that a sympathetic man feels his brother's pain; and surely, a brave man can save many lives in battle. But, when I look deeply inside myself, neither sympathy nor valiance hail themselves as most important. Rather, I find in me a nugget which everyone says is pure gold. It came via inheritance from my mom. She got it from her mom. Corene Cunningham, alias Big Mama, was the most giving person in all of Bessemer. **She would actually take her very last penny and freely give it to anyone that she thought truly needed it; she'd cook full meals for visitors and passers-by and bid them to sit at her table just like family; she would even counsel them in all of the ways of her grace!** My most important character trait is the thing my gramps gave to me through my mom: my willingness to give to others!

**Prompt #4A:**

***Explain why your favorite type of music is so good to you.***

**Response #4A:**

When I hear that “bomba-rata-bomba” of those rapid fire beats, triggering the dancers’ sinuous moves, there remains not even a shadowy doubt that reggaeton is the saucy sultan of all music forms. I bow to it willingly, kowtowing to its rhythms. **For me, this royal Caribbean creation is a melodious mood shifter.** It stops the dark clouds of my own mind from raining in my world, and it makes my blue Mondays feel like holiday weekends. **When I’m sluggish** from the drag of tedious chores or too much homework, *it’s reggaeton to the rescue.* It hits me like an icy, ruby red Monster—wide mouth agape surging and flowing through me! **Too,** *Its Latin rhythms easily coax me into burning off extra calories,* injecting a drive in me that would thoroughly impress even the most driven of personal trainers. In my world, reggaeton rules!

**Prompt #5A:**

***Write to persuade your principal to allow the seniors to have a party after every grading period.***

**Response #5A:**

Dear Mrs. Jinks:

This letter is not the brainchild of slothful students who do little work and seek play only. Au contraire -- this note sings the melancholy chorus of unmet needs. The undersigned are all honor roll students, (the best and brightest). Their signatures say this proposal is truly theirs. Mrs. Jinks, we have considered **myriad items that could re-energize, refocus, and re-tool** us after each draining quarter of diligent work (which we do most happily). Ultimately, we chose a party -- or, should I say, the party chose us! It came to us quietly one day, like a gentle epiphany. “A local DJ,” it said, “some Calypso beats, and two slices of triple cheese pizza would ready you, my children, to work ever proudly to earn PSCMS yet another ‘A!’”

**Prompt #6A:**

***Write to explain which household chore you like doing the LEAST.***

**Response #6A:**

Cold greasy skillets, baked-on cheese, and no help – these are the reasons I detest washing the dishes, especially the ones that other people dirtied! Sure, I hate cutting grass too, the way any normal kid would. I hate babysitting style-cramping brats, and I hate picking up sticky garbage that missed the can! Trust me -- my list of *hates* is infinite. Yet, I still reserve the word, *detest*, solely for the dish-washing experience. **Let me explain some of my misery to you:** *touching cold, greasy skillets puts my teeth on edge and makes me cringe with chills. The hard baked-on cheese splits my very expensive, professionally manicured, used-to-look-totally-real fingernails; and, this you-don’t-really-need-any-help mindset* that has so utterly blinded both my parents – well, let’s just say I’ve started to pray about that one!

## First Supporting Paragraphs

### Prompt #1B:

*Of all the animals in the world, which is your favorite and why?*

### Response #1B:

**First**, to be able to soar on the cool wings of the wind is the ultimate ability. **To watch** these graceful birds do it so effortlessly is the most inspiring sight under Heaven. It makes me feel on some innate level like I, too, am soaring. **For instance**, during one of last fall's National Geographic specials, I sat transfixed in front of my television, totally mesmerized as those kings of the air just glided and dove over and around the snow-covered peaks of the Alleghenies. The commentator, obviously betaken by the majesty of the vision, made a knowing observation. She said, "Ah – to be such a winged creature is to be one of the most honored of The Most High!" All I could do was nod and whisper, "Amen, sister."

### Prompt #2B:

*What would you change if you could change anything in the world?*

### Response #2B:

**First of all**, evidence of this blood-shedding atrocity is all about us. **Tune in** to any nightly news broadcast, and the top stories read, *Two motorists gunned down at red light; Deadly violence breaks out at local football game; Missing ten year old found dead*, and it goes on. **Here's a real-time example**: Just last week, my dad called to my mom to show her a special bulletin. The FBI's 10 Most Wanted list was being updated. They announced that a sadistic serial killer was making his way across the U.S. -- a trail of corpses in five states. He or she was doing crazy things to the bodies like writing odes to Attila the Hun, and carving crosses on the victims' chests. The police psychologists called these "acts of utter hatred!"

### Prompt #3B:

*Tell which of your personal character traits is most important to you and explain why.*

### Response #3B:

**First of all**, I see myself perfectly portrayed in Big Mama's description, especially the money-giving part. **I always find myself** dead broke because I gave my last dime to a girlfriend who needed lunch money, bus fare, or something. And, I never feel bad about it. It always seems like that's what I'm supposed to do. **Here's an example**: Tiffany is a major airhead, okay? But, she's my chief dawg and my BFF. Anyway, she left home Tuesday with an empty purse. Just because it matched her blouse and her shoes, she saw no need to put anything in it, including money. So, at lunch time, she got to the cafeteria pay lady with a tray of pizza and curly fries, but no cash. She almost cried in embarrassment. I, of course, came to the rescue, giving her my last three allowance dollars and feeling like it was par for the course.

**Prompt #4B:**

***Explain why your favorite type of music is so good to you.***

**Response #4B:**

**First**, reggaeton is a natural mood shifter. **With its hypnotic beats**, it can morph a beaten down spirit into a vibrant life-loving attitude that thrives on thrills and positive perspectives. Mondays never have a chance to be blue when reggaeton is pulsing through the airways. Mondays are simply forced to adopt one of the vibrant weekend hues that color the happy life! **I remember so clearly:** The Fourth of July weekend was closing out, and a go-to-school-and-slave Monday was just arriving. Jose, one of my friends, called me at 6:00 a.m. with reggaeton blasting in the background. Before I could yell at him for calling me so early, the beat took me and reshaped my sour mood and gave me a glorious spirit. I just laughed with rhythm in my chuckle and thrill in my soul! Reggaeton had instantly worked its magic!

**Prompt #5B:**

***Write to persuade your principal to allow the seniors to have a party after every grading period.***

**Response #5B:**

Dear Mrs. Jinks:

**First**, and most obvious, is this: every battery loses its charge after long use. **Our brains**, after all, are just biological batteries, feeding energy and directions to the rest of us. When it's time to re-charge, nothing works better than a major power source. What could be more powerful than a fifth and sixth hour party on the first Friday after each grading period? **Picture this:** Scores of tired, frowning students drag into the cafe, eyes sore from reading, fingers stiff from essay writing, and hearts virtually broken from want of compassion. Then, the aroma of triple cheese pizza triggers a smile, and the beat of those Calypso sounds coaxes rhythm into their steps. After two hours of lip smacks and toe taps, sparks begin to fly again. Batteries are now recharged and ready to power another quarter of potent academic study!

**Prompt #6B:**

***Write to explain which household chore you like doing the LEAST.***

**Response #6B:**

**Now**, the world is filled with terrible evils and manifold acts of utter disgust, so I say this with all qualifications in mind: Washing cold greasy dishes is the worst punishment under the sun. **The mere thought of it** gives me these chilly bumps all over my forearms and neck, and it makes my teeth feel like I'm chewing on gritty cardboard. **Here's one of my gut-wrenching tales:** It was Saturday morning, the day after my older brother's seventeenth birthday party. Every imaginable pot, pan, dish, and skillet was in the sink. My mom, who's supposed to love me, called my name with a deceitful glee that bespoke the hidden wickedness in her soul. She chimed, "Billie, the sink is waiting. Hurry, so we can go shopping!" My arms bumped up, and I licked my front teeth, trying to get the grit off before I threw up. It didn't work. I had to mop the slimy floor first, then do the disgusting dishes. What a way to start a Saturday!