

EXPOSITORY ESSAY PROMPT SAMPLE AND SOURCES

Writing Prompt

Write an expository essay about the benefits of different kinds of housing.

Your expository essay must be based on this prompt and topic, and it must incorporate ideas and information found in the sources provided.

Use your best writing to complete an essay that

- is focused on your central idea;
- combines evidence from multiple sources with your own elaboration to develop your ideas;
- is organized and includes transitions within and among ideas;
- provides citations for quoted material and source ideas; and
- demonstrates correct use of grammar and language appropriate to the task.

Write your multiparagraph essay to an academic audience in the space provided.

Housing

Source 1: Prefab Houses

by Blake Lindsay

Annotation key: (pick different colors for different types of evidence)

Statistic-
Anecdote-
Fact-
Expert Quotation-

- 1 There are many types of housing. Tiny houses and recreational vehicles (RVs) or vans are popular choices in the United States. A tiny house is what it sounds like—basically a shrunken traditional house with a kitchen, a bathroom, and one or two living areas or bedrooms. Van life and RVs are great for those who don't like to stay in one place for too long.
- 2 Another modern choice for housing is prefabricated houses. "Prefabricated" means they are built in a factory and then shipped to buyers. This is much different from traditional houses that are built right on the ground where they will stay forever. Traditional construction produces a lot of waste. Prefabricated houses don't create as many extra pieces of material that have to be thrown away.
- 3 It's also much faster to order a "prefab" house than to build a brand-new, full-size house. Some prefab houses come in kits that buyers can put together themselves; others are assembled by a team from the company that built the house's parts. Either way, building them takes anywhere from a few hours to a few weeks. Building a traditional house usually takes at least a few months.
- 4 Prefabricated houses come in many shapes and sizes. Many of them are smaller than average houses. Some are only the size of the average bedroom or living room. These have to be good at storing things. Tables might fold into walls, and clothes and shoes might fit inside furniture. Efficiency¹ is another important feature. Most of these small houses use less plumbing and electricity than larger houses. Full-size houses can also be prefabricated. Often, larger houses must be shipped in smaller pieces.
- 5 Another advantage of prefabricated houses is that they can be customized. That means people can make changes to them to fit their individual style and needs. Customers can take a company's existing prefab house design options and make small adjustments. Maybe they add a room or put in more windows. Some companies even let customers send in their own designs for a prefab house and then build it for them. One easy way to customize is to build a house with shipping containers. Using one to six of these big metal boxes that go on semi-trucks, people can put together whatever house they want. They can set them next to each other, end to end, or stack them on top of each other like giant blocks.

¹ efficiency: the ability to save resources or materials

- 6 When most people think of housing, images of houses and apartments come to mind. However, many types of housing have benefits. Whatever type of housing people choose, the important thing is that they are comfortable in their space.

“Prefab Houses” by Blake Lindsay. Written for educational purposes.

Source 2: Tiny Houses, Big Backyards

by Mary Jo Hunst

- 7 Seventeen-year-old Zephyr Goza sits with his dad, Dennis, near the front window of their house. They watch cars go by outside and talk about an upcoming play they’ll perform in. After a while, Zephyr moves to the sofa. He lies down and telephones a friend. While talking, he watches his mother, Kimberly, feed lengths of cloth through her sewing machine—costumes she’s making for the play. From his reclining view, Zephyr can no longer see the traffic outside, but he can see the telephone poles passing, one by one.

- 8 Wait—the telephone poles are moving?

- 9 Well, no—it’s the Gozas who are moving. They’re in a motor home—their house on wheels. Zephyr’s dad is in the driver’s seat (although, when not sewing, Mom’s the usual driver), and the front window is the windshield. It’s an everyday moment in the life of a nomadic family that lives full-time in a recreational vehicle (RV) and travels to a new place every few days. . . .

Wheel Estates

- 10 On the outside, RVs combine a trailer with an automobile or truck engine. Inside, they have a living area, kitchen and bathroom areas, and usually a bedroom. . . .
- 11 Not only are RVs compact, they’re self-sufficient. Cities supply electricity, gas, and water to traditional houses, but (except in campgrounds with utility hookups) RV families supply all that themselves. They fill (and keep refilling) a large “white water” holding tank with fresh water for cooking and bathing. Used water from sinks and showers drains into a “gray water” holding tank, and the toilet flushes into a “black water” holding tank. Gray and black water are carried on the RV until they can be drained at a dumping station that connects underground to a sewer or septic tank.
- 12 It’s similar with power. Large batteries supply electricity for the RV, and full-timers must plan ahead—sometimes using solar panels or generators—to ensure the batteries are fully charged.

- 13 RVerS select possessions based on how useful they are compared to how much space, water, and power they use. Refrigerators and microwave ovens are common, but regular ovens are used more for storage than cooking. Some RVerS think dishwashers, clothes washers and dryers, toasters, and even coffee makers use too many utilities. . . .

Why Move?

- 14 The Gozas, full-timers since 1988, travel for work. Their family performance troupe, Act!vated Storytellers, stages family shows at schools and libraries nationwide. Based on folk tales and classic literature, the shows encourage reading, theatre arts, and imagination. Dad writes the scripts, Mom choreographs and makes the costumes and sets, and they all—including Zephyr and audience members—perform. Then they travel to the next performance via whatever itinerary takes them past unique people and places along the way. They stop for a few days when they need to use their laptops for prolonged periods, or to make costumes and sets and rehearse for a new show.
- 15 Are they ever tempted to settle someplace? Dennis Goza admits, “It crosses my mind every time we get stranded somewhere with vehicle problems.” . . .

School's In

- 16 In a sense school is wherever learning takes place and for full-timers it's obviously not in a traditional school building. Instead they're homeschooled (or, more accurately, road-schooled) by their parents. . . .
- 17 It's a bit like being on a constant field trip. One day you might be reading a book in a library or bookstore. The next day you could be visiting a zoo or museum, a Civil War battlefield, or a state capital. You could watch an actual space-shuttle launch or look through a real 10-story radio telescope. You might even get your hands dirty helping a park ranger or spending time behind-the-scenes at a restaurant or sewage treatment plant.

Excerpt from “Tiny Houses, Big Backyards” by Mary Jo Hunst. Copyright © 2007 by Mary Jo Hunst. Reprinted by permission of Muse Magazine via Copyright Clearance Center.

Source 3: Very Little House on the Prairie

by *The Economist*

- 18 Several years ago Brad Kittel was living in the small town of Gonzales, Texas, running an architectural-antiques shop and feeling restless. He had the largest collection of antique door hardware in the country, and a warehouse full of salvaged¹ material. But it was not shifting. So in 2006 he started Tiny Texas Houses, a building operation based in the appropriately tiny town of Luling, as a way of showing off his wares.
- 19 One of Mr. Kittel's current projects is a custom-built Victorian-style farmhouse with a green exterior. Most of the house is to be made of salvaged materials. It will have a full kitchen and bathroom, a loft big enough to sleep in, and a roomy living area with a vaulted ceiling. At 350 square feet, this is a fairly capacious² model. Some of his tiny houses are half that size.
- 20 The idea is to offer a greener and cheaper alternative. . . . And Mr. Kittel is not alone. The Small House Movement has been around for years, encouraging people to think about how much house they really need. But lately it has attracted more attention. "It seems like a perfect convergence of a bad housing market meeting a bad economy and more awareness about global warming," claims Jay Shafer, an enthusiastic advocate. His Tumbleweed Tiny House company sells small ready-made houses as well as plans for slightly larger ones. Its teensiest model, the XS-House, measures 65 square feet. . . . For several years, the company survived on a sale here and there. Lately, says Mr. Shafer, interest has risen.
- 21 In one sense tiny houses are not a novel idea. Plenty of people live in small spaces. But the average American home is pretty big. . . .
- 22 The indications now, though, are that the trend is to scale back. According to the Census Bureau, the median size of home starts³ dropped to 2,114 square feet in the fourth quarter of 2008, down more than 100 square feet from the first quarter of the year. And 100 square feet is a significant slice of space. Mr. Shafer's whole house is about that size.

¹ salvaged: saved from being destroyed

² capacious: able to contain a large amount; roomy

³ home starts: the number of new homes on which builders have started construction in any particular month

EXPOSITORY TEXT-BASED B.E.S.T. WRITING RUBRIC

Grades 7–10 Expository Rubric Responses are scored holistically by domain and earn scores by demonstrating most of the descriptors defined in a given score point.*			
Score Point	Purpose/Structure	Development	Language
4 Above grade-level accomplishment demonstrated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central idea is focused on the task and consistently maintained throughout. Organizational structure strengthens the response and allows for the advancement of the central idea. Purposeful transitional strategies connect ideas within and among paragraphs and create cohesion. Effective introduction and conclusion enhance the essay. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skillful development demonstrates thorough understanding of the topic. Effective elaboration may include original student writing combined with (but may not be limited to) paraphrasing, text evidence, examples, definitions, narrative, and/or rhetorical techniques as appropriate to support the central idea. Smoothly integrated, relevant evidence from multiple sources lends credibility to the essay. Evidence is appropriately cited. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integration of academic vocabulary strengthens and furthers ideas. Skillful use of varied sentence structure contributes to fluidity of ideas. Use of standard English grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling demonstrates consistent command of the communication of ideas. Tone and/or voice strengthens the overall response.
3 Within the range of grade-level performance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central idea is focused on the task and generally maintained throughout. Organizational structure is logical and allows for advancement of the central idea. Purposeful transitional strategies connect ideas within and among paragraphs. Sufficient introduction and conclusion contribute to a sense of completeness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logical development demonstrates understanding of the topic. Adequate elaboration may include (but may not be limited to) a combination of original student writing with paraphrasing, text evidence, examples, definitions, narrative, and/or rhetorical techniques as appropriate to support the central idea. Relevant, integrated evidence from multiple sources lends credibility to the exposition. Evidence is appropriately cited. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integration of academic vocabulary demonstrates clear expression of ideas. Sentence structure is varied and demonstrates grade-appropriate language facility. Use of grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling demonstrates grade-appropriate command of standard English conventions. Tone and/or voice is appropriate for the overall response.

* Citation is not a holistic consideration. Without citation, the highest score possible in *Development* is 2.

Grades 7–10 Expository Rubric Responses are scored holistically by domain and earn scores by demonstrating most of the descriptors defined in a given score point.*			
Score Point	Purpose/Structure	Development	Language
2 Approaching the range of grade-level performance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central idea may be unclear, loosely related or insufficiently sustained within the task. Organizational structure may be repetitive or inconsistent, disrupting the advancement of ideas. Transitions attempt to connect ideas but may lack purpose and/or variety. Introduction and conclusion may be present but repetitive, simplistic, or otherwise ineffective. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development may demonstrate partial or incomplete understanding of the topic. Elaboration may attempt to develop the central idea but may rely heavily on the sources, provide loosely related information, be repetitive or otherwise ineffective. Evidence may be partially integrated and/or related to the topic but disconnected from the exposition. Lacks appropriate citations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vocabulary and word choice may be imprecise or basic, demonstrating partial command of expression of ideas. Sentence structure may be partially controlled, somewhat simplistic, or lacking grade-appropriate language facility. Inconsistent use of correct grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and/or spelling may contain multiple distracting errors, demonstrating partial command of standard English conventions. Tone and/or voice may be inconsistent. May be grammatically accurate but too brief to demonstrate grade-appropriate command of language skills.
1 Below grade-level performance demonstrated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central idea may be absent, ambiguous, or confusing, demonstrating lack of awareness of task. Demonstrates little or no discernible organizational structure. Transitions may be absent or confusing. Introduction and conclusion may be unrelated to the response and/or create confusion. Too brief to demonstrate knowledge of purpose, structure, or task. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Response may demonstrate lack of understanding of the topic and/or lack of development. Elaboration may consist of confusing ideas or demonstrate lack of knowledge of elaborative techniques. Evidence from sources may be absent, vague, and/or confusing. Lacks appropriate citations. Too brief to demonstrate knowledge of elaboration, topic, or sources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vocabulary and word choice may be vague, unclear, or confusing. Sentence structure may be simplistic or confusing. Use of grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and/or spelling may contain a density and variety of severe errors, demonstrating lack of command of standard English conventions, often obscuring meaning. Tone and/or voice may be inappropriate. Brevity with errors demonstrates lack of command of language skills.

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ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY PROMPT SAMPLE AND SOURCES

Writing Prompt

Write an argumentative essay about whether facial recognition technology is beneficial or harmful.

Your argumentative essay must be based on this prompt and topic, and it must incorporate ideas and evidence found in the sources provided.

Use your best writing to complete an essay that

- is focused on your position;
- combines evidence from multiple sources with your own elaboration to develop your ideas;
- rebuts at least one counterclaim with reasoning;
- is organized and includes transitions within and among ideas;
- provides citations for quoted material and source ideas; and
- demonstrates correct use of grammar and language appropriate to the task.

Write your multiparagraph essay to an academic audience in the space provided.

Facial Recognition

Source 1: Some Devices Recognize Your Face. Is That a Good Thing?

by Kathryn Hulick

- 1 You pick up your phone and stare at it. Instantly, the screen unlocks. But it won't do that for anyone else. The phone knows who you are. It recognizes the shape of your face.
- 2 Welcome to the world of the latest iPhone. It comes with a feature called Face ID. Apple executive Phil Schiller described it this way at the product launch: "... your iPhone is locked until you look at it and it recognizes you. Nothing has ever been more simple, natural, and effortless."
- 3 Your face isn't the only characteristic you can use as a password. Many smartphones already accept fingerprint logins. Other security systems check the shape of the ear, patterns in the eye, or the way a person walks. All of these characteristics, called biometrics, are unique enough to identify someone.
- 4 People like using biometrics for security because they're easy. You can't misplace or forget your own face. They're also usually very secure. It's hard to fake another person's body parts. But it's not impossible.
- 5 And the face may be one of the easiest body parts to copy. Most teens post plenty of selfies. These could potentially help someone hack into a system like Face ID.
- 6 In 2016, researchers at the University of North Carolina gathered publicly available Facebook photos. They used them to build 3D models of faces. Then they showed these fake faces to five different facial recognition systems. Four out of the five let the imposter in. (Face ID wasn't part of the test.)
- 7 Once a biometric password has been stolen, you can't easily change it. You can't get a new face!
- 8 There's one more aspect of facial recognition that worries experts. It would be easy for someone else to hold your phone in front of your face to unlock it. . . .
- 9 Some people probably won't worry about all that. It's just too cool to be able to unlock a device at a glance.

Source 2: As facial-recognition technology grows, so does wariness about privacy.

by Rachel Lerman

- 10 As Mike Vance approaches the glass door that leads to RealNetworks' engineering office, he smiles slightly at a small camera mounted in front of him. Click. The door unlocks, responding to a command from software powering the camera that recognized Vance's face and confirmed his identity.
- 11 Vance, a senior director of product management at the Seattle tech company, leads the team that created Secure, Accurate Facial Recognition—or SAFR, pronounced “safer.” . . .
- 12 It took three years, 8 million faces and more than 8 billion data points to develop the technology, which can identify a face with near perfect accuracy. . . .
- 13 The introduction of the technology has thrust RealNetworks into the center of a field that is growing quickly as software gets better at identifying faces. But growing along with it are privacy concerns and rising calls for regulation—even from the technology companies that are inventing the biometric software.
- 14 Facial-recognition technology is already common, used in everything from photo apps that sort pictures of people, to unlocking an iPhone, to law-enforcement agencies searching databases of driver's license photos.
- 15 Facial recognition is used, broadly, in two ways, said Oren Etzioni, CEO of Seattle's Allen Institute for Artificial Intelligence, the sister organization to Paul Allen's brain science institute. One is consumer convenience, such as grouping photos, and the other is for surveillance and tracking. . . .
- 16 But now, as RealNetworks' SAFR shows, the technology has been moving further into public spaces. And with that, privacy advocates wonder if people fully realize how often their faces are being scanned, and advocates and the industry alike question where the line is between the benefits to the public and the cost to privacy.

Learning a face

- 17 Facial-recognition technology functions much like fingerprinting—each face has its own unique signature, and companies teach machines to recognize and match people's unique features.
- 18 RealNetworks' technology maps 1,600 data points on each face it sees. The team has been “training” its machine for about two years, since the launch of RealTimes, its free app that lets people build photo slideshows. Baked into the 3,300-word user agreement for that app is language that allows RealNetworks to use customer photos to train its facial-recognition system.

- 19 SAFR doesn't know the identity of people in the RealTimes photos, Vance said — there are no names, addresses or other identifying information in the massive database of 8 million faces. But what it can do is tell if two faces are the same person. It's gotten so accurate that it can tell identical twins apart and match family photos of the same person even if they were taken decades apart. . . .

Between here and sci-fi

- 20 In China, the technology is so common that it can identify people who are jaywalking and display their photos on public digital billboards.
- 21 The U.S. isn't near that level yet of routinely identifying people in public streets or parks, said Clare Garvie, an associate at the Center on Privacy and Technology at Georgetown Law Center, but she finds the lack of transparency into how the technology is being used and the lack of federal laws troubling. . . .
- 22 But proper regulation could prevent that, and there's reason to be optimistic, Garvie said, pointing to Microsoft's call for such laws.

Excerpt from "As facial-recognition technology grows, so does wariness about privacy. Use at a school in Seattle fuels debate" by Rachel Lerman. Copyright © 2018 by the Seattle Times. Reprinted by permission of the Seattle Times via Copyright Clearance Center.

Source 3: Facebook wants to save your face. Should you say yes to facial recognition?

by Jessica Guyenn

- 23 Of all the information Facebook collects about you, nothing is more personal than your face.
- 24 With 2.2 billion users uploading hundreds of millions of photos a day, the giant social network has developed one of the single-largest databases of faces and — with so many images to train its facial recognition software — one of the most accurate.
- 25 The question of whether you should let Facebook save your face is gaining in urgency as it moves to expand its deployment of facial recognition, rolling it out in Europe, where it was scrapped in 2012 over privacy concerns and scanning and identifying more people in photos. . . .
- 26 Should people trust Facebook with one of their most sensitive data points which, unlike a credit-card number, can't — or at least can't easily — be changed?

- 27 Distrust over how Facebook treats its customers' personal data has jumped after 87 million users had their data pilfered¹ by Cambridge Analytica. . . .
- 28 Most forms of tracking target the technology you use. Cookies on your computer. Digital fingerprints your browser leaves behind. GPS on your smartphone. What makes this technology different: It tracks the most identifiable part of your body.
- 29 "You can delete cookies. You can change browsers. And you can leave your smartphone at home," says facial recognition expert Alvaro Bedoya, executive director of Georgetown Law's Center on Privacy & Technology. "But you can't delete your face, and you can't leave it at home."
- 30 Facebook's facial recognition technology analyzes photos and videos to create a unique "template" to identify you. The technology is a shortcut that scans photos to suggest names of friends to tag.
- 31 The company says it has no plans to make people's facial recognition data available to advertisers or outside developers. But the more Facebook can glean from users' photos about their interests, activities and social circles, the more precisely it can target advertising.
- 32 Facebook says it has tight control over its database of people's likenesses. Even if someone were to obtain a "template," it does not function like other face recognition systems.
- 33 "When we provide our biometric information to Facebook, we don't know where that information is going," Electronic Frontier Foundation senior attorney Jennifer Lynch said. "Facebook says: 'Trust us to keep it safe.' But Facebook has shown time and time again that it makes the wrong choices when it comes to protecting users' data."
- 34 Facial recognition, sometimes called faceprinting, is used by major technology companies around the globe. Apple last year replaced its fingerprint reader with a camera that uses your face to unlock the iPhone.
- 35 In December, Facebook expanded the scope of its technology with the announcement that it would let users know when someone posts a photo of them, even if they are not tagged in it. The technology informs you if someone uses a photo of you in their profile picture to help detect impersonations. It also makes it possible for the visually impaired to have screen readers tell them who's tagged in friends' photos.
- 36 What may seem harmless—allowing Facebook to create an impression of your face—can be more telling than some people think. And soon it could reveal even more, including the state of your health, privacy experts say. The technology is becoming so sophisticated that Facebook can recognize people in photos and videos even if their faces are obscured, picking up clues from posture and body shape.

¹ pilfered: stolen

37 “This technology is powerful in a way that our society isn’t really used to,”
Bedoya says.

Excerpt from “Facebook wants to save your face. Should you say yes to facial recognition?” by
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ARGUMENTATIVE TEXT-BASED B.E.S.T. WRITING RUBRIC

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4 Above grade-level accomplishment demonstrated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Position** is focused on the task and consistently maintained throughout. Organizational structure strengthens the response and allows for the advancement of the argument. Purposeful transitional strategies connect ideas within and among paragraphs, creating cohesion. Effective introduction and conclusion enhance the essay. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skillful development demonstrates thorough understanding of the topic. Effective elaboration may include original student writing combined with (but may not be limited to) paraphrasing, text evidence, examples, definitions, narrative, and/or rhetorical techniques as appropriate to enhance the argument. Smoothly integrated, relevant evidence from multiple sources lends credibility to the argument. Grade-level expectations for counterclaim(s) are fully addressed. Evidence is appropriately cited. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integration of academic vocabulary strengthens and furthers ideas. Skillful use of varied sentence structure contributes to fluidity of ideas. Use of standard English grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling demonstrates consistent command of the communication of ideas. Tone and/or voice strengthens the overall argument.
3 Within the range of grade-level performance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Position** is focused on the task and generally maintained throughout. Organizational structure is logical and allows for the advancement of the argument. Purposeful transitional strategies connect ideas within and among paragraphs. Sufficient introduction and conclusion contribute to a sense of completeness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logical development demonstrates understanding of the topic. Adequate elaboration may include (but may not be limited to) a combination of original student writing with paraphrasing, text evidence, examples, definitions, narrative, and/or rhetorical techniques as appropriate to support the argument. Relevant, integrated evidence from multiple sources lends credibility to the argument. Grade-level expectations for counterclaim(s) are sufficiently addressed. Evidence is appropriately cited. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integration of academic vocabulary demonstrates clear expression of ideas. Sentence structure is varied and demonstrates grade-appropriate language facility. Use of grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling demonstrates grade-appropriate command of standard English conventions. Tone and/or voice is appropriate for the overall argument.

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** Claim in Grade 7 benchmarks

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1 Below grade-level performance demonstrated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Position** may be absent, ambiguous, or confusing, demonstrating lack of awareness of task. Demonstrates little or no discernible organizational structure. Transitions may be absent or confusing. Introduction and conclusion may be unrelated to the response and/or create confusion. Too brief to demonstrate knowledge of purpose, structure, or task. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Response may demonstrate lack of understanding of the topic and/or lack of development. Elaboration may consist of confusing ideas or demonstrate lack of knowledge of elaborative techniques. Evidence from the sources may be absent, vague, and/or confusing. Counterclaim(s) are absent or confusing. Lacks appropriate citations. Too brief to demonstrate knowledge of elaboration, topic, or sources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vocabulary and word choice may be vague, unclear, or confusing. Sentence structure may be simplistic or confusing. Use of grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and/or spelling may contain a density and variety of severe errors, demonstrating lack of command of standard English conventions, often obscuring meaning. Tone and/or voice may be inappropriate. Brevity with errors demonstrates lack of command of language skills.

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