

Answering your questions about the Honors Invitational Writing Sample:

Q: How does the Honors program evaluate my writing skills?

A: When you come to Ferris for the Honors Invitational, one of the activities is a one-hour writing test. You'll write an essay, on a topic we'll give you. Your essay is then read by a team of English professors who will give your essay a rating. This rating is part of the formula that determines your acceptance into the Honors Program

Q: What is the topic of the Writing Sample?

A: Each year the topic is different; however, the writing topics always require you to use your own experiences to reflect on current issues and/or events. The Honors website includes some of the previous years' topics so you can see how these work.

Q: Will I be handwriting the essay or using a computer? What resources can I use?

A: You'll be writing your essay using Microsoft Word and a campus computer (not a personal laptop). You will be able to use the spelling and grammar checker in Word; however, you will not have access to the Internet or other resources. (You will not need external resources for your response.) Your essay will be saved to a hard drive, printed, and then circulated to the essay rating team.

Q: How much time will I have to write the essay?

A: You will have an hour (60 minutes) to prepare your response to the writing prompt.

Samples of past prompts:

Sample #1:

Social networking. It's the fancy new term for web-based groups that link people with similar interests, allowing them to communicate easily, share information, and, by connecting with each other's friends, expand their own circle of friends. Among high school and college students, some of the more popular sites include MySpace, Facebook, and Xanga.

Select one of the situations listed below and respond appropriately, using what you know about social networking sites.

1. Write an essay providing advice to a newbie who plans to set up his or her own profile on a public site. You may address your essay to a specific person (a friend or acquaintance) or to a larger, general audience.
2. Write an essay providing advice to a friend who has his (or her) profile on a public social network website. Discuss the potential consequences of putting personal information on such sites.
3. Write an informational article for your local community newspaper explaining what social networks are, how they work, and what value they have for their users.

Sample #2:

Your school will be hosting an exchange student next year. This student will be the first from his/her country to visit your school. At this time, you don't know much about the student, including his/her gender or specific interests, hobbies, or talents. You do know that the student will be spending an entire academic year away from his/her home and will be living with a host family from your community. You also know that he/she speaks and writes English fluently.

Consider the advice you could give this student to make his/her adjustment to your school, to the community, and to the state.

Write a letter to this prospective student, welcoming him/her and offering suggestions and advice to make his/her transition as smooth as possible.