

Notes to teacher:

Last year I moved to fifth grade for the first time in 10 years, and things have changed since I last taught fifth! Namely, the text based writing. I had a terrible time finding prompts and passages for my students, so I ended up writing a lot of my own. I wanted to find topics that are engaging and interesting and not the same old ones we always see. I found that our writing time was also great for discussions, debates, and digging into real issues. Although we are required to teach students how to write the essays, I wanted it to be more than just test prep.

-This pack does not give a how to. (I'm still figuring out what works for me and wouldn't feel comfortable telling you what to do.) This is simply a set of passages with one prompt. Use it as a practice test or with your own writing instruction. I included the writing pages and planning sheet similar to the FSA (the Florida writing test) in case you want to make it a writing simulation. For most prompts, we did our writing in our notebook to save paper, but as we neared test time, I wanted students to be familiar with the constraints of the test. Many of my students had to adjust to only being able to write in the three lined pages.

Note about author names:

I wrote all of these articles myself, but I used pseudonyms because I teach students to cite the author's names, and I thought it would be awkward if they all had the same author.

Sources:

These are the different sources I used for these articles.

1. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2018/08/02/red-tide-impacts-florida-coast-algae-growth-kills-wildlife/891352002/>
2. <http://myfwc.com/research/redtide/faq/>
3. <http://www.foxnews.com/us/2018/08/22/wildlife-advocate-astounded-by-effects-red-tide-on-fish.html>
4. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/07/travel/florida-red-tide-tourism-gulf-coast.html>
5. <https://www.vox.com/energy-and-environment/2018/8/30/17795892/red-tide-2018-florida-gulf-sarasota-sanibel-okeechobee>
6. <https://www.cnn.com/2018/08/22/us/red-tide-fishkill-costs-trnd/index.html>
7. https://www.washingtonpost.com/science/2018/09/09/toxic-red-tide-algae-moves-north-near-tampa-bay-killing-hundreds-thousands-fish/?utm_term=.5588b4d4e98d
8. https://www.yoursun.com/englewood/hundreds-attend-cardboard-boat-races-pioneer-days-events-continue-today/article_e636de16-ae0f-11e8-bd50-e3a901aa0ab4.html
9. <http://www.pineisland-eagle.com/page/content.detail/id/555809/Critically-endangered--Goliath-grouper--among-thousands-of-dead-fish-removed-from-Sanibel-beaches-in-the-last-two-days.html?nav=5059>

Thank you!

Thank you for purchasing this resource. I hope you and your students enjoyed the topic! I have more in the works including several social studies topics. If you have any suggestions for topics or prompts, feel free to e-mail me at sarah@morethanaworksheet.com.

Hope you're having a great year!

Sarah

Read the “Red Tide in Florida” passage set.

Red Tide in Florida

Source 1: Red Tide Wipes Out Wildlife

by Sarah Wiggins

- 1 Red tide is causing problems on Florida’s west coast. What exactly is red tide? When a type of algae called *K. brevis* blooms in enormous amounts, the sea water appears red or brown. This is referred to as red tide. When there is too much of this algae in the water, fish and other sea life are unable to survive. The blooms die and release neurotoxins, or substances that are poisonous to the brain and nervous system of animals.
- 2 The red tide outbreak of 2018 is one of the worst in decades. As of August 2018, more than 2,000 tons of fish have washed up on Florida’s beaches. One report from Lighthouse Beach in southwest Florida indicated 40 dead fish per square foot. Among the dead statewide were a 26 foot long whale shark, two 100+ pound tarpons, and at least 19 “critically endangered” goliath groupers ranging from 40-200 pounds each. Fish are not the only victims. Other sea creatures have died as a result of the red tide, including 452 sea turtles, 100 manatees, and 11 dolphins.
- 3 In addition to the creatures that live in the water, many types of sea birds have been suffering as well. Some birds are scavengers which means they feed off of dead fish. The birds eat the fish, and they fill their bellies with the same neurotoxins that killed the fish. The birds often show signs that their brains aren’t functioning properly. For instance, they may seem disoriented or unable to fly or even walk correctly. They may have seizures or just lay in the sand. Although many of the birds make a full recovery once the toxins leave their system, some die as a result.
- 4 Local governments are faced with a problem. How exactly do you clean up all of the dead wildlife? The governor of Florida, Rick Scott, declared a state of emergency. Now, Florida is eligible to receive federal money to help with the clean up efforts. Cities contract or hire different companies to do the jobs. You may see bulldozers on the beach scooping the dead bodies of sea animals off the shore. Fishing boats with large nets are used to clean up the carcasses floating in the water. For such a tiny organism, the toxic algae is causing big problems.

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Red Tide in Florida

Source 2: Out of Business

by Randy Taylor

- 5 In Sarasota, Florida, many restaurants advertise special sunset menus. Patrons can enjoy their meals out on a deck overlooking the pristine blue waters of the Gulf of Mexico. They may even catch a glimpse of a pair of dolphins frolicking in the distance. The sky is painted orange and pink as the sun slowly sets over the horizon. It is a picture perfect scene that unfolds nightly at many of Sarasota’s top beachfront restaurants. The restaurant owners depend on the sunset crowd for business.
- 6 This summer, unfortunately, sunset viewers have been few and far between. A phenomenon known as red tide is to blame. The red tide crisis on the west coast of Florida has been responsible for the deaths of thousands of fish and other sea animals. Fish are notoriously stinky creatures, but imagine thousands of dead and rotting fish carcasses baking in the Florida sun. It does not smell pretty.
- 7 Unfortunately the putrid smell alone is enough to drive customers away from many oceanfront restaurants. Smell and taste go hand in hand when it comes to enjoying fine dinners. People do not want to smell dead fish as they eat a fancy steak. Instead of beachfront dining, many restaurant goers choose to eat inland instead.
- 8 Restaurants are not the only ones feeling the impact of the red tide. The coastal towns in Florida rely on the tourism industry. Hotels, shops, and countless other businesses count on tourists to come and spend money in their establishments. Several hotels have reported increased cancellations. City streets that are normally filled with shoppers and tourists are like ghost towns.
- 9 Companies that offer boat tours, kayak rentals, yoga on the beach, and stand up paddle boarding lessons are also suffering. People just don’t want to spend time in or near the dirty water. Tourists and locals alike are choosing activities elsewhere, and this is bad for business. The red tide is negatively affecting Florida’s economy.

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Red Tide in Florida

Source 3: Beach Bummer

by Al Borland

- 10 When the Wiggins family moved to Venice, Florida, in the summer of 2018, they anticipated many beach-filled days in their future. On moving day, after hauling their belongings across the state, they wanted to celebrate the move with pizza on the beach. They picked up an extra large cheese pie and drove a few miles to the beach hoping to catch the sunset after a long day of moving. “I thought it was strange that there were no other cars in the parking lot,” Matthew comments looking back.
- 11 When they arrived, the kids scrambled out of the car giddy with excitement to stick their toes in the sand. As soon as the family of four stepped into the parking lot, everyone started coughing. “It felt like my throat was burning,” Amelia remembers. They all continued coughing and choking as they made their way to the shore.
- 12 Everyone was uncomfortable. “My nose was on fire,” Evan recalls. Still, they made their way to the beach hoping that the ocean breeze would clear things up. Before everyone even took a single bite of their pizza slice, it was too unbearable to breathe. Disappointed, they headed back to the car.
- 13 Sarah remembers, “As soon as we crossed the bridge, we were all breathing better. We didn’t know what happened. We had heard of red tide but didn’t really know the effects. We Googled it and found out that yes, our symptoms were likely caused by the red tide.”
- 14 It’s not just family beach days that are impacted. Other local waterways are feeling the effects, too. Many canals and bays are connected to the Gulf of Mexico. The toxic algae and the dead fish make their way into these bodies of water as well.
- 15 Englewood, Florida hosts an annual cardboard boat race on Lemon Bay. Teams construct a boat completely out of cardboard, and one person must actually row the boat to compete in a race. Because of red tide, this much loved event had to be moved to a pool. While the event was still a success, paddling in a pool is not the same. One participant commented, “We want our beaches back.”

Writing Prompt

Write an informative essay in which you explain to your classmates the problems that the red tide outbreak has caused in Florida. Use information from the passages in your essay.

Manage your time carefully so that you can

- read the passages;
- plan your response;
- write your response; and
- revise and edit your response.

Be sure to include

- an introduction;
- information from the passages as support; and
- a conclusion that is related to the information presented.

Your response should be in the form of a multiparagraph essay. Write your response in the space provided.

A large rectangular box containing 25 horizontal lines for writing.



A large rectangular box containing 25 horizontal lines for writing.



Learning is... so much MORE Than a Worksheet!

Thank you!!

Thank you so much for downloading this resource! I hope that you and your students love it. I am so honored that you took the time out of your busy day to visit my store.

Happy Teaching!

~Sarah

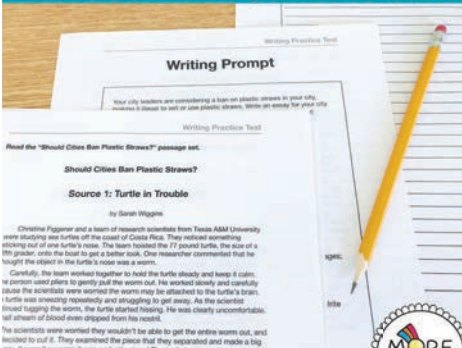


PS: I would LOVE to see pics of how you use my resources in your classroom!

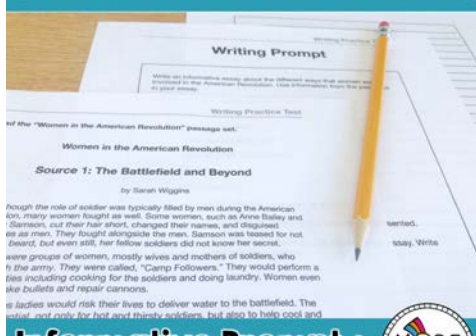
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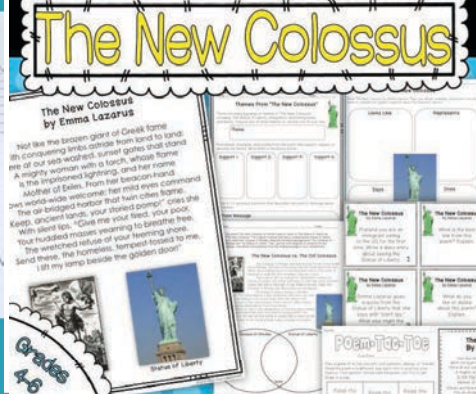
Text-Based Writing Practice (Should cities ban plastic straws?)



Text-Based Writing Practice (Women in the American Revolution)



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