

# Fall Writing Prompt

## Response to Literature Writing Task

### Directions:

- In this writing test, you will respond to the writing task on the following pages.
- You will have time to plan your response and write a first draft with edits.
- Only what you write on the lined pages in this booklet will be scored.
- Use only a No. 2 pencil to write your response.

### Scoring:

Your writing will be scored on how well you write an essay that:

- shows your understanding of the author's viewpoint and the development of the main character through the story;
- supports judgments through references to both the text and prior knowledge;
- develops your interpretation by giving examples from the text; and
- uses correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

Grade 5

# Fall Writing Prompt

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Read the following story. You must write a response to literature for this story.

## At My Parents' Grocery

By Leonard Chang

Every morning at three-thirty my father wakes up to buy the fruits and vegetables he will sell in his store that day. I hear his clock radio burst to life, Korean announcers talking quickly. We live in a small apartment above the store, and his alarm wakes everyone.

By four o'clock my father has showered, and he meets the trucks that drop off crates of apples, oranges, grapefruits, and tomatoes. Sometimes if I can't fall back to sleep, I look out the front window and see him checking fruits, holding them in his hands, smelling them. He nods, and the men load the rest onto the cement. My father then carries them into our store. The truck drives away with a loud rumble.

My mother wakes up at five, and she makes breakfast. Since this is summer and there is no school, I help my parents at the store. Sometimes I wish I could go out and play, but whenever I ask, my mother tells me in Korean, "You can play when you've finished helping." I work in the mornings. After that, I can go play with Chris, who lives in a building down the street. My father even pays me fifty cents each time I help.

The morning two weeks ago was different, because it was the first time I saw a customer stealing.

She wasn't really a customer, but the daughter of a customer. I had seen her in the store with her mother, Mrs. Diaz, before. I noticed that Mrs. Diaz spoke Spanish to her daughter the way my parents speak Korean to me. I answer back in English, and so did the girl.

I was stacking soup cans on the shelves when I saw this girl looking through the comic books in the magazine section. I heard my father talking with Mrs. Diaz.

The girl didn't see me, but I saw her. She put one of the comic books underneath her shirt.

My heart pounded so loudly that I couldn't hear my father and Mrs. Diaz talk anymore. All I heard was a *thump-thump-thump*. I didn't know what to do. I saw the girl walking to her mother. I couldn't let her get away! But I couldn't move my legs. I could only watch her walk with her mother closer and closer to the door.

"*Abojee!* Father! She took a comic without paying!" I yelled.

*(continued on next page)*

My father looked surprised. Before the girl could say anything, her mother grabbed her arm and shook it. “*Verdad?* Is it true? You stole? *Digame!* Tell me!”

Everyone was quiet. The girl looked at me, then at my father. She began to cry, and she nodded her head. She pulled out the comic book from underneath her shirt.

“Oh, Mr. Kim. I am sorry! My Sarita made a big mistake!” Mrs. Diaz told my father. “She gives back!” She tried to take the comic book, but Sarita didn’t let go, and it ripped.

“*Ay de mi!*” Mrs. Diaz cried. “Look what you did to the comic!”

My father said, “*Kenchanoh.* It’s OK. She can keep. You good customer. Your daughter can keep.” He smiled at Sarita, who was still crying.

“Oh no,” Mrs. Diaz said. “Let me pay right now . . . .” She dug in her purse. “How much?”

“Three seventy-five.” Mrs. Diaz’s eyes widened, and she dug deeper. I saw her mouth make a small line. “Three seventy-five?” she asked.

“It’s OK. You can pay later,” my father said. “No,” Mrs. Diaz said. She kept looking in her purse. “I have money here.”

I realized that Sarita had tried to steal the comic because she didn’t have the money. I felt bad for yelling. Maybe she needed a job, I thought.

I had an idea.

“What if she worked with me?” I asked. They turned to me.

I said, “She can work with me to pay for the comic,”

My father and Mrs. Diaz looked at each other. My father nodded. Mrs. Diaz said, “Yes. It is a good idea.” She turned to her daughter, shaking her finger. “You hear? You will work and buy the comic!”

“Yea, Mama,” Sarita said, hanging her head.

“*Jowah.* Good,” my father said. “She come tomorrow, and my son will show her.”

As they left, Sarita looked back, and though she still seemed sad, she stuck out her tongue at me.

Sarita has been working here with me for two weeks. She has paid for the comic, but my father says she is such a good worker that she can work with me for as long as she wants. Fifty cents every morning. Sarita’s mother says it’s fine with her.

Every morning at eight o’clock Sarita comes in, puts on an apron, and helps me stack cans, load fruit, and sweep and mop. Sometimes she teaches me Spanish words, and I teacher her Korean words. We are friends now. We are *amigos*. We are *chingoos*.

“*At My Parents’ Grocery*” by Leonard Chang; September 1998. Used by permission of Highlights for Children, Inc., Columbus, Ohio. Copyrighted material.

### **Writing the Response to Literature**

In “At My Parent’s Grocery,” the boy telling the story learns a lesson through his experience at his parents’ grocery store. Use details from the narrative to explain what lesson we can learn from this story.

Your writing will be scored on how well you:

- show your understanding of the narrative,
- organize around several clear ideas,
- give examples and cite evidence from the narrative, and
- use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

### **Planning Your Response to Literature**

You may use this page to help you plan your essay before you begin writing. Your work on this page will NOT be scored.

You should not spend more than 10 to 15 minutes planning your response to literature.









