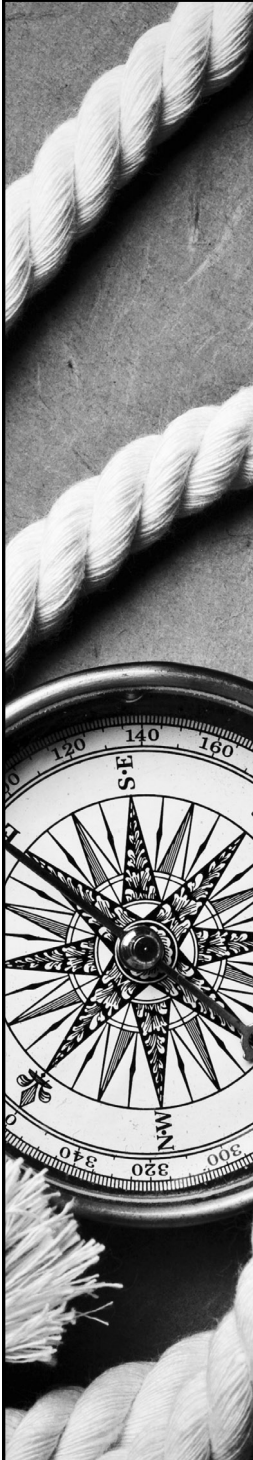


# Explore



New Jersey: **ASK6**  
**Writing**  
Second Edition

by Suzanne Borner and Joanne Connon

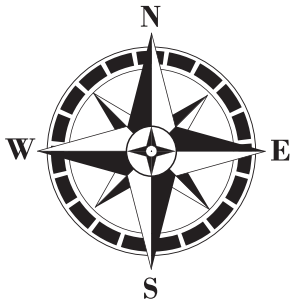
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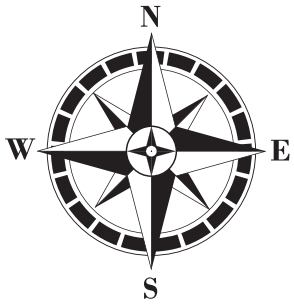
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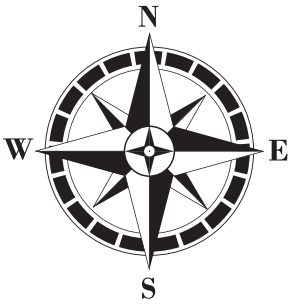


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## Beginning the Writing Process

### Writing to Explain, Persuade, and Speculate

#### INTRODUCTION

On the Grade 6 New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJ ASK6), you will be required to respond to different writing prompts, including explanatory, persuasive, and/or speculative writing tasks.

An **explanatory** writing task asks you to *explain* your ideas to the reader in order to share your knowledge. The response is usually written as a composition.

Your goal in **persuasive** writing is to *persuade* or convince others that your opinion or belief about an issue is worthy of consideration. The response is written as a letter or as a composition.

**Speculative** writing means you *speculate*. When you speculate, you think about something or ponder possibilities. The response is usually written as a creative story.



## WRITER'S CHECKLIST

### IMPORTANT POINTS TO REMEMBER AS YOU WRITE:

#### CONTENT/ORGANIZATION

- Focus on your purpose for writing and your audience.
- Develop a clear topic or central idea.
- Support your ideas with details, explanations and examples.
- Put your ideas in the order that best communicates what you are trying to say.

#### SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION

- Use clear and varied sentences.

#### USAGE

- Use words correctly.
- Use varied and vivid vocabulary.

#### MECHANICS

- Capitalize, spell and punctuate correctly.
- Write neatly.

## NJ ASK Writer's Checklist

No matter which type of writing prompt you are given, the NJ ASK Writer's Checklist is a useful tool. Refer to it before you write to help plan your writing, as you write to make sure you are staying on task, and after you write to make sure you addressed the important points it lists.

Cool! This will help me.



## **WRITING TO EXPLAIN**

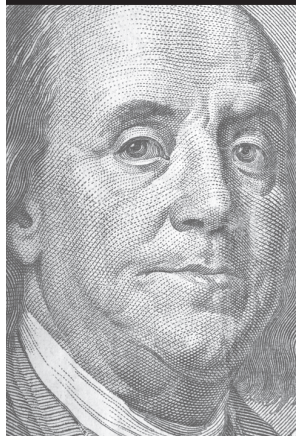
Think about what you are trying to do when you explain something. Your goal is to inform your audience. You may be explaining how you do something or why you do it, whether you agree or disagree with a viewpoint, or what something means to you. When you write an explanatory piece, you want to help your reader understand your reaction to a topic or what you know about a subject.

On the NJ ASK, you may be given a topic to explain. Or, you may be given a quotation or adage (a common or traditional saying) and asked to explain your response to it.

As with all good writing, you must consider your topic, your audience, and your purpose for writing—what are you trying to explain, to whom, and why? Your explanation should be made clear with details and examples, and you should explain your ideas in a logical order.



## EXPLANATORY WRITING PROMPT 1



Your language arts teacher has asked you to consider how the following quotation relates to you.

### Prompt

**“A slip of the foot you may soon recover,  
but a slip of the tongue you may never get over.”**  
—*Benjamin Franklin (1706–1790)*

A large, stylized cursive signature of Benjamin Franklin in a light gray color, positioned behind the main text.

### Writing Task

Write an essay to explain what this quotation means to you and why. Use details and examples to help make your explanation clear to the reader.

---

Read the quotation several times. Think about what Benjamin Franklin meant. Then think about what that quotation means to you or how it applies to your own life. How would you explain what you think it means?

### Tips to Understanding Quotations

Sometimes you know what a quotation means just by reading it. Other times, it can be confusing. If you get stuck, try the following ideas.

- Rewrite the quotation. (Writing it out often makes the quote clearer in your mind.)
- Who wrote it? Do you know any quick facts about the author? (Knowing something about the person who said or wrote it can also help clarify the meaning.)
- If the person’s year of birth and death are given, do you recall anything interesting or significant that happened during that period of history? (The quotation might have something to do with what was happening at the time the author lived.)

### **Prewrite to generate ideas.**

Jot down thoughts about the following. You don't need complete sentences for prewriting as this is simply a space to generate ideas for your composition. Listing key words and phrases will help you decide on a direction as you think about what you'd like to write. You may think of additional questions or wish to organize your thoughts in another way—use whatever works best for you.

**Answer the questions on the next page.**

1. What do you think the author meant?

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---

---

2. Do you agree with the author?

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---

3. Can you apply the quotation to your own life?

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4. What examples can you use to demonstrate how it applies to your life?

---

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---

### **Details**

Now fill in the details. What descriptive details and examples might work well to help your reader understand what you are trying to say?

### **Organization**

An explanatory composition should be organized logically so that the reader can follow along easily. In other words, don't jump around from point to point. Keep your central idea in mind as you write and focus on what you are trying to explain to your audience. Put your ideas in the order that makes the most sense for this topic.

If you are responding to a quotation or adage, the quotation/adage and author (if known) should be included somewhere in the composition, and usually makes the most sense in the opening paragraph.

### **Transitions**

As you move from sentence to sentence, paragraph to paragraph, and idea to idea, use transitional words or phrases to make your writing smooth. Try some of the examples on the next page.

### **Beginning and Ending**

Consider, too, how important your beginning and ending sentences are. The first sentence is intended to grab the reader and "pull" him or her into the writing. The last sentence should be strong enough to make your writing memorable.

## TRANSITIONS

|                               |                         |                               |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <i>above all</i>              | <i>granted</i>          | <i>on one hand</i>            |
| <i>accordingly</i>            | <i>hence</i>            | <i>on the contrary</i>        |
| <i>again</i>                  | <i>however</i>          | <i>on the other hand</i>      |
| <i>also</i>                   | <i>in addition</i>      | <i>or</i>                     |
| <i>as a result</i>            | <i>in conclusion</i>    | <i>otherwise</i>              |
| <i>as an illustration</i>     | <i>in contrast</i>      | <i>rather</i>                 |
| <i>at any rate</i>            | <i>in fact</i>          | <i>second</i>                 |
| <i>at other times</i>         | <i>in other words</i>   | <i>similarly</i>              |
| <i>at the same time</i>       | <i>in particular</i>    | <i>since</i>                  |
| <i>besides this</i>           | <i>in spite of this</i> | <i>specifically</i>           |
| <i>certainly</i>              | <i>in the same way</i>  | <i>still</i>                  |
| <i>consequently</i>           | <i>in truth</i>         | <i>surely</i>                 |
| <i>equally important</i>      | <i>indeed</i>           | <i>then</i>                   |
| <i>especially critical is</i> | <i>last</i>             | <i>therefore</i>              |
| <i>finally</i>                | <i>likewise</i>         | <i>third</i>                  |
| <i>first</i>                  | <i>moreover</i>         | <i>thus</i>                   |
| <i>for example</i>            | <i>most importantly</i> | <i>to explain</i>             |
| <i>for instance</i>           | <i>namely</i>           | <i>to illustrate</i>          |
| <i>for this reason</i>        | <i>nevertheless</i>     | <i>to wrap it up</i>          |
| <i>further</i>                | <i>next</i>             | <i>while this may be true</i> |
| <i>furthermore</i>            | <i>now</i>              | <i>with this in mind</i>      |
| <i>generally</i>              | <i>of course</i>        | <i>yet</i>                    |

