

## **TCAP Writing Pilot TCAP/WA**

### **DIRECTIONS**

**In a few moments, you will see a passage(s) and a prompt. You are to plan and write an essay about the passage(s) according to the instructions provided in the prompt. This activity will show how well you write. Express your thoughts clearly and make your writing interesting to the reader. Your essay will be scored as a rough draft, but you should watch for careless errors.**

**Before writing, spend some time reading the passage(s), thinking about the prompt, and planning your thoughts.**

**WRITE ONLY ON THE PROMPT AND PASSAGE(S) YOU ARE GIVEN.**

**The time you have for writing is 60 minutes.**

**PROMPT C – GRADE 11 WRITING ASSESSMENT  
TENNESSEE COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT PROGRAM (TCAP)  
2012 PILOT TEST**

Following is an excerpt from an article examining a Supreme Court ruling backing school censorship of student newspapers. As a reference, the First Amendment to the United States Constitution is also included.

**from “The Supreme Court on ‘Hazelwood’: A Reversal  
on Regulation of Student Expression”**

Both judges and school officials have been thinking about and dealing with the nature of students’ rights to free speech through the 1970s and 1980s, since *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent School Dist.*, the 1969 landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision that acknowledged student rights. Stating that students do not “shed their constitutional rights . . . at the schoolhouse gate” (393 U.S. at 506), the Court upheld the right of three Des Moines high school students to wear black armbands as a peaceful symbol of opposition to the Vietnam war. . . .

The Court’s ruling and reasoning subsequently were applied to student expression other than the wearing of armbands, from theater productions to art shows, from school assemblies to student publications. . . . The Supreme Court, balancing students’ constitutional freedoms and administrators’ traditional responsibilities, said in *Tinker* that school officials could not stop expression simply because they disliked it. . . .

Student journalists’ efforts to gain press freedom experienced a major setback on January 13, 1988, when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Hazelwood School Dist. v. Kuhlmeier* that school administrators could censor a school-sponsored newspaper. Just as *Tinker* had started an era of expanded student rights, so *Hazelwood* signals a departure that could lead toward more restriction of students’ expression.

The *Hazelwood* principal believed that the stories he censored—accounts of unnamed, pregnant students and a report on the impact of parental divorce on students—were unfair and inappropriate for teenagers. He was concerned that the “anonymous” students could be identified, that the school would appear to be condoning teenage pregnancy, and that divorced parents criticized should be consulted prior to publication. . . .

Instead of ruling narrowly on student newspapers, the Court in *Hazelwood* gave discretion to school officials to:

1. Serve as publisher. . . .
2. Censor, if there is a “reasonable” educational justification, any expression that does not properly reflect the school’s educational mission. The Court called it reasonable to censor a newspaper story that school officials believe is not “fair,” expression that deals with “sensitive topics,” and content that is “ungrammatical, poorly written, inadequately researched, biased or prejudiced, vulgar or profane, or unsuitable for immature audiences.”
3. Use this power to control expression through any school-sponsored activity. Legal distinctions between class-produced and extra-curricular publications disappeared. Theater production, art shows, debates, and pep rallies are just some of the school-sponsored activities now under tighter control. . . .
4. Review student expression in advance, even when no guidelines define what will or will not be censored.

---

Source: *Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier* (1988). U.S. Supreme Court.

## **Constitution of the United States, Amendment I**

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

---

from *The Constitution of the United States*. Public Domain.

**READ THIS WRITING PROMPT CAREFULLY BEFORE YOU BEGIN YOUR WRITING.**

### **Freedom of Expression**

**Based on the passages, write an essay in which either (1) you support the viewpoint that high schools have the right to control the content of student publications or (2) you support the viewpoint that such control violates students' right to free expression. Support your claim using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence from the texts provided.**

You may use the space below for prewriting. However, only the lined pages of your answer document will be scored. You will have a time limit of 60 minutes.

**This writing prompt must be returned with all test material.**