

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 I – GRADE 8 WRITING ASSESSMENT
TENNESSEE COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT PROGRAM (TCAP)
2012 PILOT TEST**

In the following passage, the character recalls his arrival to America.

**from *The Rise of David Levinsky Book V: I Discover America, Chapter 1*
by Abraham Cahan**

Two weeks later I was one of a multitude of steerage passengers on a Bremen steamship on my way to New York. Who can depict the feeling of desolation, homesickness, uncertainty, and anxiety with which an emigrant makes his first voyage across the ocean? I proved to be a good sailor, but the sea frightened me. The thumping of the engines was drumming a ghastly accompaniment to the awesome whisper of the waves. I felt in the embrace of a vast, uncanny force. And echoing through it all were the heart-lashing words: “Are you crazy? You forget your place, young man!” When Columbus was crossing the Atlantic, on his first great voyage, his men doubted whether they would ever reach land. So does many an America-bound emigrant to this day. Such, at least, was the feeling that was lurking in my heart while the Bremen steamer was carrying me to New York. Day after day passes and all you see about you is an unbroken waste of water, an unrelieved, a hopeless monotony of water. You know that a change will come, but this knowledge is confined to your brain. Your senses are skeptical. . . .

When the discoverers of America saw land at last they fell on their knees and a hymn of thanksgiving burst from their souls. The scene, which is one of the most thrilling in history, repeats itself in the heart of every immigrant as he comes in sight of the American shores. I am at a loss to convey the peculiar state of mind that the experience created in me.

When the ship reached Sandy Hook I was literally overcome with the beauty of the landscape.

The immigrant’s arrival in his new home is like a second birth to him.

Imagine a new-born babe in possession of a fully developed intellect. Would it ever forget its entry into the world? Neither does the immigrant ever forget his entry into a country which is, to him, a new world in the profoundest sense of the term and in which he expects to pass the rest of his life. I conjure up the gorgeousness of the spectacle as it appeared to me on that clear June morning: the magnificent verdure of Staten Island, the tender blue of sea and sky, the dignified bustle of passing craft—above all, those floating, squatting, multitudinously windowed palaces which I subsequently learned to call ferries. It was all so utterly unlike anything I had ever seen or dreamed of before. It unfolded itself like a divine revelation. I was in a trance or in something closely resembling one.

“This, then, is America!” I exclaimed, mutely. The notion of something enchanted which the name had always evoked in me now seemed fully borne out. . . .

When I say that my first view of New York Bay struck me as something not of this earth it is not a mere figure of speech. I vividly recall the feeling, for example, with which I greeted the first cat I saw on American soil. It was on the Hoboken pier, while the steerage passengers were being marched to the ferry. A large, black, well-fed feline stood in a corner, eying the crowd of new-comers. The sight of it gave me a thrill of joy. “Look! There is a cat!” I said to Gitelson. And in my heart I added, “Just like those at home!” For the moment the little animal made America real to me. At the same time it seemed unreal itself. I was tempted to feel its fur to ascertain whether it was actually the kind of creature I took it for. . . .

The stringent immigration laws that were passed some years later had not yet come into existence. We had no difficulty in being admitted to the United States, and when I was I was loath to leave the Garden.

Many of the other immigrants were met by relatives, friends. There were cries of joy, tears, embraces, kisses. All of which intensified my sense of loneliness and dread of the New World. The agencies which two Jewish charity organizations now maintain at the Immigrant Station had not yet been established. Gitelson, who like myself had no friends in New York, never left my side. He was even more timid than I. It seemed as though he were holding on to me for dear life. This had the effect of putting me on my mettle.

“Cheer up, old man!” I said, with bravado. “America is not the place to be a ninny in. Come, pull yourself together.” In truth, I addressed these exhortations as much to myself as to him; and so far, at least, as I was concerned, my words had the desired effect.

from *The Rise of David Levinsky: Book V*, by Abraham Cahan. Public Domain.

READ THIS WRITING PROMPT CAREFULLY BEFORE YOU BEGIN YOUR WRITING.

Moving Away from Home

Write an expository essay explaining the author’s changing tone about moving to an unfamiliar place. Analyze the impact Cahan’s specific word choices have on establishing tone, including analogies and allusions. Draw evidence from the passage to support your analysis. Develop your topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, concrete details, or other information and examples. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling in your response.

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.