

# Grammar & Writing

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**Writing Prompt:  
A Special Gift**

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If you are in the "Grading by Mailing" program, finish your essay as instructed. Tear the page off and mail it in with the self-addressed envelope. In a week, you will receive your graded essay with comments and suggestions by a certified professional.

Your essay must be written on the lines provided on your answer sheet -- you will receive no other paper on which to write. You will have enough space if you write on every line, avoid wide margins, and keep your handwriting to a reasonable size. Remember that people who are not familiar with your handwriting will read what you write. Try to write or print so that what you are writing is legible to those readers.

You have twenty-five minutes to write an essay on the topic assigned below. DO NOT WRITE ON ANOTHER TOPIC. AN OFF-TOPIC ESSAY WILL RECEIVE A SCORE OF ZERO.

Think carefully about the issue presented in the following excerpt and the assignment below.

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*Think about a time you received a gift, something you wanted, or something unexpected that made you feel happy. Write a story about that time. Be sure to narrate an event or series of events and include specific details in your response.*

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Write an essay in which you develop your point of view on this issue. Support your choice or position with reasoning and examples taken from your reading, studies, experience, or observations.





**Misc. Usage**

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Choose the best to complete each of the following.

1. He soon \_\_\_\_\_ the money he won in the lottery.  
(A) ran through  
(B) dropped through  
(C) ran away  
(D) dropped down
  
2. \_\_\_\_\_ favors the brave.  
(A) Luck  
(B) Fortune  
(C) Time  
(D) Fate
  
3. It wasn't serious; he did it \_\_\_\_\_.  
(A) by fun  
(B) funny  
(C) for fun  
(D) to fun you
  
4. He's crazy: he's a \_\_\_\_\_.  
(A) moony  
(B) goony  
(C) noony  
(D) loony
  
5. It is said waiters \_\_\_\_\_ a fair amount in tips.  
(A) lift out  
(B) pick out  
(C) pick up  
(D) lift up

6. Don't hang about: get a \_\_\_\_\_.
- (A) move to
  - (B) moving
  - (C) move on
  - (D) move out
7. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a person who spends money like a drunken sailor.
- (A) plunger
  - (B) spendthrift
  - (C) wastrel
  - (D) playboy
8. A drowning man clutches at a \_\_\_\_\_.
- (A) thread
  - (B) straw
  - (C) mote
  - (D) penny
9. People threw things and the meeting \_\_\_\_\_.
- (A) cracked up
  - (B) blew up
  - (C) broke out
  - (D) broke up
10. A chain is as strong as its \_\_\_\_\_.
- (A) weakest link
  - (B) corrosion
  - (C) anchor
  - (D) individual member

11. She worries too much; the least little thing \_\_\_\_\_.
- (A) sets her up
  - (B) gets her in
  - (C) makes her up
  - (D) puts her out

Choose the best to complete each of the following.

12. Don't walk so quickly. You'll never keep up that \_\_\_\_\_ for ten miles.
- (A) stride
  - (B) step
  - (C) pace
  - (D) walk

13. He always \_\_\_\_\_ song in the shower.
- (A) breaks out
  - (B) breaks up in
  - (C) breaks into
  - (D) breaks in

14. The sudden attack caught the enemy \_\_\_\_\_.
- (A) napping
  - (B) undone
  - (C) open
  - (D) sleepy

15. I don't think he's completely honest; he seems to live on his \_\_\_\_\_.
- (A) reputation
  - (B) nerves
  - (C) wits
  - (D) feet

## GW6 Grammar & Writing Sample

16. The police followed a number of clues, but have so far drawn a \_\_\_\_\_.
- (A) negative
  - (B) blank
  - (C) zero
  - (D) nil
17. I am happy to fall \_\_\_\_\_ anything you suggest.
- (A) in with
  - (B) to with
  - (C) over
  - (D) into
18. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a book of little value, written only to make money.
- (A) novelette
  - (B) potboiler
  - (C) paperback
  - (D) stopgap
19. The government \_\_\_\_\_ a committee to investigate the problem.
- (A) mounted
  - (B) put up
  - (C) raised
  - (D) set up
20. It's a skilled job, and you need quite a lot of \_\_\_\_\_.
- (A) know-how
  - (B) knowledge
  - (C) understanding
  - (D) knowing



21. She is not popular. She is the office gossip, always \_\_\_\_\_ to the boss.  
(A) saying stories  
(B) going on  
(C) letting it out  
(D) telling tales
22. There is a storm \_\_\_\_\_. We had better head for home.  
(A) rising up  
(B) getting up  
(C) lifting  
(D) setting up
23. In the autumn, in the northern hemisphere, the days \_\_\_\_\_.  
(A) draw in  
(B) wane  
(C) close to  
(D) come in

## Countable and Non-Countable Nouns

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In English, there are two kinds of nouns: countable nouns and non-countable nouns. It is important to understand the difference between them, because they often use different articles, and non-countable nouns usually have no plural. Here is a summary of the differences: Countable nouns are things which can be counted. That means that there can be more than one of them. Also, when a countable noun is singular and indefinite, the article “a/an” is often used with it. (The real meaning of “a” is “one”.) “There are two books on the table.”  
“There is an elephant in my car.”

Non-countable nouns are usually things which cannot be counted, such as rice or water. Non-countable nouns have a singular form, but when they are indefinite, we either use the word “some” or nothing at all instead of an article. “Could I have some water please?”  
“I’d like rice with my steak.”

How can one tell whether a noun is countable or non-countable? You can usually work out whether a noun is countable or non-countable by thinking about it. Countable nouns are usually objects which can be counted. Non-countable nouns are often substances (such as sand, water or rice) which cannot be easily counted, or they may be large abstract ideas such as “nature”, “space” or “entertainment”. Here are some more examples:

### Countable nouns

- pen
- table
- car
- idea
- answer
- class
- exam
- shoe

### Non-countable nouns

- education
- intelligence
- clothing
- soap
- air
- cheese
- grass
- literature

Put a ‘C’ on each space if the noun is countable. Put a ‘N’ otherwise.

24. \_\_\_\_\_ telephone

25. \_\_\_\_\_ vocabulary

26. \_\_\_\_\_ honesty

27. \_\_\_\_\_ forest

28. \_\_\_\_\_ hydrogen

29. \_\_\_\_\_ letter

30. \_\_\_\_\_ mail

31. \_\_\_\_\_ baggage

32. \_\_\_\_\_ ink

33. \_\_\_\_\_ ice

34. \_\_\_\_\_ toothbrush

35. \_\_\_\_\_ coffee

36. \_\_\_\_\_ furniture

37. \_\_\_\_\_ orange

38. \_\_\_\_\_ money

39. \_\_\_\_\_ dictionary

40. \_\_\_\_\_ English

41. \_\_\_\_\_ electricity

42. \_\_\_\_\_ fish

43. \_\_\_\_\_ information

Pick the right answer for each one.

44. There \_\_\_\_\_ a lot of oil in Kuwait.  
(A) is  
(B) are
45. There \_\_\_\_\_ a lot of cars on the road today.  
(A) is  
(B) are
46. There \_\_\_\_\_ a lot of people outside the factory.  
(A) is  
(B) are
47. There \_\_\_\_\_ a lot of reasons why I don't like him.  
(A) is  
(B) are
48. There \_\_\_\_\_ a lot of pollution in this city.  
(A) is  
(B) are
49. There \_\_\_\_\_ a lot of good restaurants in Lyon.  
(A) is  
(B) are
50. There \_\_\_\_\_ too much sugar in this cola drink.  
(A) is  
(B) are

51. There \_\_\_\_\_ too much bad news on the television.  
(A) is  
(B) are
52. There \_\_\_\_\_ too many poor people in the world.  
(A) is  
(B) are
53. There \_\_\_\_\_ too much noise. Please be quiet.  
(A) is  
(B) are
54. There \_\_\_\_\_ people here.  
(A) isn't much  
(B) isn't many  
(C) aren't much  
(D) aren't many
55. There \_\_\_\_\_ time left. Please hurry.  
(A) isn't much  
(B) isn't many  
(C) aren't much  
(D) aren't many
56. There \_\_\_\_\_ coffee here. Could you buy some more when you go to the shops?  
(A) isn't much  
(B) isn't many  
(C) aren't much  
(D) aren't many

57. There \_\_\_\_\_ opportunities as good as this one.  
(A) isn't much  
(B) isn't many  
(C) aren't much  
(D) aren't many
58. There \_\_\_\_\_ jobs as good as this one.  
(A) isn't much  
(B) isn't many  
(C) aren't much  
(D) aren't many
59. There \_\_\_\_\_ space left in my office. I need a bigger one.  
(A) isn't much  
(B) isn't many  
(C) aren't much  
(D) aren't many
60. There \_\_\_\_\_ people as nice as him.  
(A) isn't much  
(B) isn't many  
(C) aren't much  
(D) aren't many
61. There \_\_\_\_\_ suitable candidates for the job.  
(A) isn't much  
(B) isn't many  
(C) aren't much  
(D) aren't many

62. There \_\_\_\_\_ furniture in his house.

- (A) isn't much
- (B) isn't many
- (C) aren't much
- (D) aren't many

63. There \_\_\_\_\_ food in the house.

- (A) isn't much
- (B) isn't many
- (C) aren't much
- (D) aren't many



**Reading for Writing**

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Choose the best word to complete the following passage.

Lemmings are animals that live in the mountains of Norway. These \_\_\_\_\_, furry little creatures are four or five inches long and have stubby tails.

64. (A) thin  
(B) nervous  
(C) plump  
(D) squeaky  
(E) slender

They look like well-fed hamsters. The freezing mountain weather doesn't bother the lemmings. These animals are perfectly \_\_\_\_\_ for cold weather.

65. (A) suited  
(B) trained  
(C) arranged  
(D) raised  
(E) fed

Their waterproof coats of heavy fur keep them warm. In addition, lemmings spend the winter in cozy tunnels under the snow. Three to nine lemmings are \_\_\_\_\_ several times a year to each female.

66. (A) sent  
(B) born  
(C) shipped  
(D) mailed  
(E) flown

With good weather and lots of food, more females give birth. The population in the tunnels increases quickly. In fact, after a few years, the tunnels become too \_\_\_\_\_.

67. (A) enlarged  
(B) crowded  
(C) deep  
(D) deserted  
(E) ruined

There are just too many lemmings. Food becomes scarce, and the starving lemmings begin to quarrel. Finally, one spring, some of the animals crawl out of the tunnels in the earth. They leave their \_\_\_\_\_ home to search for food.

68. (A) cement  
 (B) leafy  
 (C) wooden  
 (D) underground  
 (E) treetop

These animals meet and join other lemming search parties. The mass of frantic lemmings scurries over hills and down valleys. They swim across rivers and lakes. At last, the animals reach the coast. But for some reason, they don't \_\_\_\_\_.

69. (A) march  
 (B) paddle  
 (C) jump  
 (D) travel  
 (E) halt

The lemmings continue into the sea and begin swimming. Maybe the exhausted animals think the sea is just another lake to cross. In the sea, however, the lemmings tire. Finally, they \_\_\_\_\_.

70. (A) eat  
 (B) swim  
 (C) howl  
 (D) drown  
 (E) hurry

They have journeyed to their own deaths.

As for the lemmings that stayed in the nest, they are as busy as usual. They have enough space and food now. It will be another three to five years before their population gets out of control again. Then other lemmings will leave once more on a strange, one-way trip to the ocean.

# Answer Key

**Misc. Usage**

- |                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| 1. A. ran through    | 28. N  |
| 2. B. Fortune        | 29. C  |
| 3. C. for fun        | 30. N  |
| 4. D. loony          | 31. N or C   |
| 5. C. pick up        | 32. N  |
| 6. C. move on        | 33. N  |
| 7. B. spendthrift    | 34. C  |
| 8. B. straw          | 35. N  |
| 9. D. broke up       | “Coffee” is a strange example, because it can be both count and non-count. Coffee is a liquid (or a powder), so you would think that it can’t be counted; however, in a restaurant, you can ask for “two coffees”, meaning “two cups of coffee”. |
| 10. A. weakest link  |  |
| 11. D. puts her out  |  |
| 12. C. pace          | 36. N  |
| 13. C. breaks into   | 37. C  |
| 14. A. napping       | 38. N  |
| 15. C. wits          | 39. C  |
| 16. B. blank         | 40. N  |
| 17. A. in with       | 41. N  |
| 18. B. potboiler     | 42. C  |
| 19. D. set up        | 43. N  |
| 20. A. know-how      | 44. A  |
| 21. D. telling tales | 45. B  |
| 22. B. getting up    | 46. B  |
| 23. A. draw in       | 47. B  |

**Countable and Non-Countable Nouns**

- |       |       |
|-------|-------|
| 24. C | 48. A |
| 25. N | 49. B |
| 26. N | 50. A |
| 27. C | 51. A |
|       | 52. B |
|       | 53. A |

- 54. D
- 55. A
- 56. A
- 57. D
- 58. D
- 59. A
- 60. D
- 61. D
- 62. A
- 63. A

**Reading for Writing**

- 64. C
- 65. A
- 66. B
- 67. B
- 68. D
- 69. E
- 70. D