

Prompt A

**2007 Form B
Question 2**

In the introduction to her book *Poison Penmanship: The Gentle Art of Muckraking*, investigative journalist Jessica Mitford (1917 – 1996) confronts accusations that she is a “muckraker.” While the term was used by United States President Theodore Roosevelt in a 1906 speech to insult journalists who had, in his opinion, done too far in the pursuit of their stories, the term “muckraker” is now more often used to refer to one who “searches out and publicly exposes real or apparent misconduct of a prominent individual or business.” With this more current definition in mind, Mitford was ultimately happy to accept the title, “Queen of the Muckrakers.”

Do you agree with Mitford’s view that it is an honor to be called a “muckraker,” or do you think that journalists who search out and expose real or apparent misconduct go too far in the pursuit of stories? Explain your position in a well-written essay that uses specific evidence for support.

Prompt B

**2006 Form B
Question 1**

In many national elections, only a fraction of eligible voters actually casts ballots. For local elections, the voter turnout is even smaller. To prevent this state of affairs, some countries, such as Australia, make voting compulsory for all adults. In a well-written essay that draws upon your reading, experience, or observations for support, take a position on the issue of compulsory voting.

Prompt C

**2004
Question 2**

Contemporary life is marked by controversy. Choose a controversial local, national, or global issue with which you are familiar. Then, using appropriate evidence, write an essay that carefully considers the opposing positions on this controversy and proposes a solution or compromise.

Prompt D

**1983
Question 3**

We live in an era of language inflation. Being a star is no longer significant because we have superstars; what is normal is tremendous or fabulous (or excellent, extraordinary, superterrific, etc.). This wholesale distribution of highest ratings defeats its own purpose. Everything is presented as something unique, unheard-of, outstanding. Thus, nothing is unique, unheard-of, outstanding. When everything is superlative, everything is mediocre.

Write an essay in which you agree or disagree with the position taken in this passage by considering the ethical and social consequences of language inflation.

Prompt E

**1987
Question 1**

In the following passage, E. M. Forster argues that personal relations are more important than causes or patriotism. Read the passage carefully. Then write an essay agreeing or disagreeing with Forster's view.

I hate the idea of causes, and if I had to choose between betraying my country and betraying my friend, I hope I should have the guts to betray my country. Such a choice may scandalise the modern reader, and he may stretch out his patriotic hand to the telephone at once and ring up the police. It would not have shocked Dante', though. Dante places Brutus and Cassius in the lowest circle of Hell because they had chosen to betray their friend Julius Caesar rather than their country Rome.

'Dante: Italian poet, 1265-1321

Prompt F

**1991
Question 3**

The first chapter of Ecclesiastes, a book in the Bible, concludes with these words:

"For in much wisdom is much grief, and increase of knowledge is increase of sorrow."

Write a carefully reasoned, persuasive essay that defends, challenges, or qualifies this assertion. Use evidence from your observation, experience, or reading to develop your position.

Prompt G

**1999
Question 3**

In the following excerpt from *Antigone*, by the classical Greek playwright Sophocles, the wise Teiresias observes:

Think: all men make mistakes,
But a good man yields when he
Knows his course is wrong,
And repairs the evil: The only
Crime is pride.

Take some time to think about the implications of the quotation. Then write a carefully reasoned essay that explores the validity of the assertion, using examples from your reading, observation, or experience to develop your position.