

Winter Writing Sample 2016

Fifth Grade

Writing Window: February 1 – February 29

STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS:

Read the writing prompt below and think of some ideas you can write about on the lined paper given to you by your teacher. Your response should be approximately two paragraphs in length.

Writing Prompt

Explain how the role or purpose of money has changed over time. Support your answer with clear text evidence from the articles.

Grade 5 – Winter Writing

Lexile Measure: 890L
Mean Sentence Length: 13.15
Mean Log Word Frequency: 3.49
Word Count: 448

A Shirt for Two Chickens

Long ago, if you needed a shirt, you might trade with your neighbor. You would give your neighbor two chickens and in exchange, your neighbor would make you a shirt. What if your neighbor had her own flock of chickens? What if she didn't need tomatoes from your garden or corn from your fields? How would you get a shirt?

Thousands of years ago, people bartered, or traded, for what they could not make or grow. At first, they traded animals for what they needed. Then they traded their extra crops for eggs, clothing, and other necessities. They also traded their services, but sometimes no one wanted what people had to trade.

Because necessity is the mother of invention, people began to use money. Using money made sure people had something others wanted because money was a lot easier to carry around than crops and animals. It also made trading less messy. Trading money for a pair of socks was much neater than giving someone a half of a chicken! However, it took a very long time to develop the money system we use today.

The cowrie snail lives near the Pacific and Indian Oceans, and its egg-shaped shell is shiny and smooth with a flat underside. Cowrie shells are the oldest and the most widely used form of money. Over three thousand years ago, people in China and Africa began using cowrie shells as money.

Then several hundred years later, the Chinese began forming metal into the shape of cowrie shells. They used these metal shells as money, and, in time, the metal shapes became round coins. The coins had holes in the middle, and they could be strung together, like a necklace.

About 2,500 years ago, people began to make coins out of silver, bronze, and gold. They were often stamped with a picture of the current ruler or king. The metal used in the coins made them valuable.

By the 700s, the Chinese tired of carrying around heavy coins. They began printing and using paper money, but they printed so much paper money that it lost its value. After all, if you could print money nonstop, everyone would have

plenty of it. In time, no one accepted the worthless money in exchange for goods.

For many years, much of the paper money in our own nation was worthless. Now the printing of money in the United States is tightly controlled. This helps keep our money valuable. Did anyone ever tell you, "Money doesn't grow on trees"? They wanted you to know that money is hard to get. However, if money did grow on trees, no one would bother picking it. It, too, would be worthless.

Grade 5 – Winter Writing

Lexile Measure: 920L

Mean Sentence Length: 14.46

Mean Log Word Frequency: 3.59

Word Count: 347

What Good is Money?

Before the United States became a country, the colonists used a mixture of Spanish, French, and English money. Banks were even allowed to print their own money. By 1860, about 8,000 banks were offering paper money that they had printed themselves, however, much of this money was worthless. Have you heard people say, “It’s not worth the paper it’s printed on”? They could have been describing paper money during this time of our history. It’s not surprising that people began to distrust paper money because they relied more on coins and old-fashioned trading.

It was not until the Civil War that our government started to control the printing of money. In 1861, Congress issued paper money in the amounts of \$5, \$10, and \$20. Most importantly, you could take this paper money to the bank and exchange it for coins. Special paper with special ink was used to print the money, so people could not easily print their own money. For the first time, Americans could trust their paper money. In fact, the money printed back in 1861 can still be used, however, most of it is in museums.

Since then, the size of paper money and the words printed on it have changed slightly. Money is now printed in \$50 and \$100 bills, yet the money we use is much the same as it was back in 1861. In fact, now most nations use paper money and coins that are printed by their governments.

What has changed is how we use money. We buy many things with credit and debit cards now, and often, no real money changes hands. Still, no one is ready to predict that paper money and coins are likely to disappear anytime soon!

Anything, even shells, can be used as money. However, everyone must be willing to accept that form of money. When people stop accepting a form of money, it loses its value. Are you thinking about inventing a new kind of money, using something you have lots of? Think again! Inventing a new money system is easier said than done!