

177 Writing and Discussion Prompts From the 2019-20 School Year

Questions for Debate and Persuasive Writing

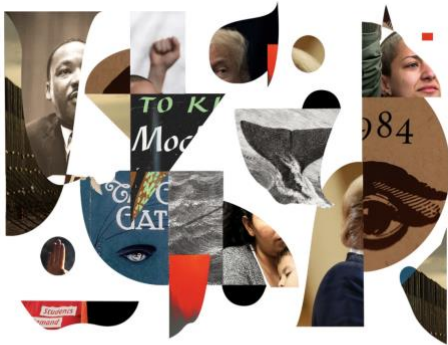


Illustration by John Whitlock. Photograph of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Marion S. Trikosko/Library of Congress; other photos from Allport Library and Museum of Fine Arts, Brendan Smialowski/Agence-France Presse, Justin Sullivan, and Murat Taner, all via Getty Images; and The New York Times.

1. [Should Students Get Mental Health Days Off From School?](#)
2. [Do Video Games Deserve the Bad Rap They Often Get?](#)
3. [Should College Be Free?](#)
4. [Where Should We Draw the Line Between Community Health and Safety and Individual Liberty and Privacy?](#)
5. [Does the United States Owe Reparations to the Descendants of Enslaved People?](#)
6. [What Topics Do You Wish You Could Learn About in School?](#)
7. [Should Parents Track Their Children?](#)
8. [When Do You Become an Adult?](#)
9. [Is the Mona Lisa Bad for Art?](#)
10. [Would You Return a Lost Wallet? \(What if It Had Lots of Money in It?\)](#)
11. [Do You Believe Aliens Exist?](#)
12. [Is Animal Testing Ever Justified?](#)
13. [Should Gifted and Talented Education Be Eliminated?](#)
14. [Do Films Like 'Joker' Endorse \(or Even Promote\) Violence?](#)
15. [Why Is It Important for People With Different Political Beliefs to Talk to Each Other?](#)
16. [What Rules, if Any, Should There Be About Phone Use During Live Performances?](#)
17. [Should Stay-at-Home Parents Be Paid?](#)
18. [Should We Feel Guilty When We Travel?](#)
19. [Are Some Youth Sports Too Intense?](#)
20. [Can Social Media Be a Tool for Learning and Growth in Schools?](#)
21. [Should Students Be Required to Take the SAT and ACT to Apply to College?](#)
22. [Should Your School Day Start Later?](#)
23. [Should Facebook Fact-Check Political Speech?](#)
24. [Should Blowouts Be Allowed in Youth Sports?](#)
25. [Should the Week Be Four Days Instead of Five?](#)
26. [Should Sports Journalism 'Stick To Sports'?](#)
27. [Should Students Be Punished for Not Having Lunch Money?](#)
28. [Should Schools Test Their Students for Nicotine and Drug Use?](#)
29. [Is Racial and Economic Diversity in Schools Important?](#)
30. [Should Texting While Driving Be Treated Like Drunken Driving?](#)
31. [Why Do Bystanders Sometimes Fail to Help When They See Someone in Danger?](#)
32. [Are Comic-Book Movies Ruining Film?](#)
33. [How Do You Think American Education Could Be Improved?](#)
34. [Should All Schools Teach Cursive?](#)
35. [What Suggestions Do You Have for Improving Lunch at Your School?](#)
36. [Should Musicians Be Allowed to Copy or Borrow From Other Artists?](#)
37. [What Do You Think About Prince Harry and Meghan 'Stepping Back'?](#)
38. [What Role Should Textbooks Play in Education?](#)
39. [Should Public Transit Be Free?](#)
40. [How Should We Punish Sports Cheaters?](#)
41. [Is There a 'Right Way' to Be a Tourist?](#)
42. [Do the Grammy Awards Represent the Best in Music Today?](#)
43. [Do You Think the World Is Getting Closer to Securing the Promise of 'Never Again'?](#)
44. [Should the Adults in Your Life Be Worried by How Much You Use You Use Your Phone?](#)
45. [Is It Offensive for Sports Teams and Their Fans to Use Native American Names, Imagery and Gestures?](#)
46. [Should Facial Recognition Technology Be Used in Schools?](#)
47. [In the Age of Digital Streaming, Are Movie Theaters Still Relevant?](#)
48. [Do Memes Make the Internet a Better Place?](#)
49. [Is Childhood Today Over-Supervised?](#)
50. [How Do You Decide What News to Believe, What to Question and What to Dismiss?](#)
51. [Should Plastic Bags Be Banned Everywhere?](#)
52. [Do You Think Online Conspiracy Theories Can Be Dangerous?](#)
53. [What Should #MeToo Mean for Teenage Boys?](#)
54. [Is It Immoral to Increase the Price of Goods During a Crisis?](#)
55. [Should Public Preschool Be a Right for All Children?](#)
56. [What Are Your Reactions to the Impeachment Inquiry of President Trump?](#)

57. [Is the Impeachment Inquiry a Teachable Moment? Or Should Politics Stay Out of the Classroom?](#)
58. [What Is Your Reaction to the Results of the Iowa Caucuses?](#)
59. [How Do You Think the Primaries and 2020 Presidential Election Should Proceed?](#)
60. [What Role Should Celebrities Have During the Coronavirus Crisis?](#)
61. [Should Schools Change How They Grade Students During the Pandemic?](#)
62. [Should We All Be Able to Vote by Mail?](#)
63. [Is It OK to Laugh During Dark Times?](#)
64. [When the Pandemic Ends, Will School Change Forever?](#)
65. [What Makes a Great Leader?](#)
66. [Should Students Be Monitored When Taking Online Tests?](#)
67. [Should National Service Be Required for All Young Americans?](#)

Questions for Creative, Personal or Reflective Writing



Illustration by Jennifer Daniel; Photographs by Getty Images

68. [How Is What You Are Studying in School Relevant to Your Life and the Larger World?](#)
69. [How Much Racism Do You Face in Your Daily Life?](#)
70. [Do You Ever Laugh at the Misfortune of Others?](#)
71. [How Much Has Your ZIP Code Determined Your Opportunities?](#)
72. [What Weaknesses and Strengths About Our World Are Being Exposed By This Pandemic?](#)
73. [What Have You Learned About Yourself During This Lockdown?](#)
74. [What's the Most Memorable Thing That Happened to You This Summer?](#)
75. [Does Your Life Ever Feel Too Busy?](#)
76. [How Do You Feel About Active-Shooter Drills in Schools?](#)
77. [When Have You Either Forgiven Someone or Been Forgiven Yourself?](#)
78. [How Do You Deal With Self-Doubt?](#)
79. [What Are Your Hometown's Shortcomings?](#)
80. [Have You Ever Had a Significant Friendship End?](#)
81. [Are You Going to a Youth Climate Strike?](#)
82. [How Well Do Your Parents Deal With Sibling Conflicts?](#)
83. [How Similar Are Your Political Views to Those of Your Parents?](#)
84. [Have You Ever Read a Book You Weren't Supposed to Read?](#)
85. [What Do You Eat for Dinner on a Typical Weeknight?](#)
86. [What's Your Favorite Punctuation Mark?](#)
87. [Do You Get an Allowance?](#)
88. [Have You Ever Encountered Racist or Extremist Content Online?](#)
89. [What Do You Think of the Field of Democratic Presidential Candidates?](#)
90. [What Is Your Favorite Rivalry?](#)
91. [Who Do You Turn To in a Crisis?](#)
92. [Are You a Worrier?](#)
93. [What Grievances Do You Have With Your Local Community?](#)
94. [What's Your Favorite Halloween Costume, Past or Present?](#)
95. [How Good Are You at Spending Time Alone?](#)
96. [What Could You Read, Listen to or Watch to Stretch Your Cultural Imagination?](#)
97. [Do You Read Reviews?](#)
98. [Do You Want to Get Married Someday?](#)
99. [Do You Seek Out New Experiences? Or Stick With the Things You Know and Love?](#)
100. [How Well Do You Read Other People?](#)
101. [What Does Thanksgiving Mean to You?](#)
102. [Do You Have Any Close Friends?](#)
103. [Have You Ever Tried to Make Money Online?](#)
104. [Do You Feel Safer When You Know You're Being Watched?](#)
105. [What Are Your Experiences With Meditation?](#)
106. [How Will You Remember the 2010s?](#)
107. [Do You See Yourself in the Books You Read?](#)
108. [What Were the Best and Worst Things About 2019 for You?](#)
109. [Are You Good at Giving Gifts?](#)
110. [What Is Your Choice for Word of the Year?](#)
111. [How Have You Coped With the Death of an Idol?](#)
112. [Who Are the Ordinary Heroes of 2019?](#)
113. [What Are Your Predictions for the New Year and the New Decade?](#)
114. [What Era Do You Wish You Had Grown Up In?](#)
115. [Would You Want to Live and Breathe Creating Content for Social Media?](#)

116. [Do You Complain Too Much, Too Little or Just the Right Amount?](#)
117. [How Would You Rate Your Listening Skills and Those of the People Around You?](#)
118. [Would You Consider Serving in the U.S. Armed Forces?](#)
119. [Have You Ever Quit Something?](#)
120. [What Are You Doing to Change Your School?](#)
121. [What Does Kobe Bryant's Death Mean to You?](#)
122. [Did You Watch the Super Bowl? What Did You Think?](#)
123. [How Have You Learned About Slavery?](#)
124. [Would You Ever Consider Becoming Vegetarian?](#)
125. [Do You Turn to Your Parents for Advice?](#)
126. [What Role Have Coaches Played in Your Life?](#)
127. [How Would You Design Your Ideal Museum?](#)
128. [Are You Able to Be Your Whole Self at School?](#)
129. [Do You Have More Good Habits Than Bad?](#)
130. [We Document Life's Milestones. How Should We Document Death?](#)
131. [How Concerned Are You About the Coronavirus Outbreak?](#)
132. [Are You a Good Person?](#)
133. [Would You Allow an Ex-Prisoner to Live With You?](#)
134. [How Would Your Life Be Different if You Didn't Have Wi-Fi and Cellular Service?](#)
135. [Stress, Worry and Anxiety Are All Different. How Do You Cope With Each?](#)
136. [Is the Diversity of Your School Accurately Reflected in Its Promotional Materials?](#)
137. [What Is Your Reaction to the Latest News About the Coronavirus Outbreak?](#)
138. [What Role Does Poetry Play in Your Life?](#)
139. [How Can We Help One Another During the Coronavirus Outbreak?](#)
140. [What Songs Matter to You Now?](#)
141. [How Is the Coronavirus Outbreak Affecting Your Life?](#)
142. [What Are You Reading, Watching, Listening To, Playing and Cooking? A Place for Recommendations](#)
143. [How Are You Staying Healthy and Fit?](#)
144. [What Questions Do You Have About the Coronavirus?](#)
145. [Has Your School Switched to Remote Learning? How Is It Going So Far?](#)
146. [How Do Animals Provide Comfort in Your Life?](#)
147. [Is the Coronavirus Pandemic Bringing Your Extended Family Closer Together?](#)
148. [What Are Some Ways to "Travel" Without Traveling During the Pandemic?](#)
149. [Holidays and Birthdays Are Moments to Come Together. How Are You Adapting During the Pandemic?](#)
150. [How Has the Coronavirus Changed How You Use the Internet?](#)
151. [How Are You Getting Your Sports Watching Fix?](#)
152. [What Acts of Kindness Have You Heard About or Participated In During Coronavirus?](#)
153. [When Has Starting Over Worked for You?](#)
154. [Is Your Family Experiencing Greater Conflict During a Time of Self-Quarantine?](#)
155. [How Are You Feeling About Missing Prom?](#)
156. [How Can You Tell a Story About Your Life Right Now Through a Few Simple Numbers?](#)
157. [What Does Your Accent Say About Who You Are?](#)
158. [How Do You Greet Your Friends and Family?](#)
159. [What Are Your Favorite Games?](#)
160. [What Do You Miss Most About Your Life Before the Pandemic?](#)
161. [What Are Your Hopes for Summer 2020? What Are Your Worries?](#)
162. [How Do You Connect With Your Parents?](#)
163. [Are You an Optimist or a Pessimist?](#)
164. [What Do the Objects in Your Home Say About You?](#)
165. [What's the First Thing You Plan to Do After Quarantine?](#)
166. [Do You Enjoy Going On a Walk — Especially Now?](#)
167. [What's the Best Book You Ever Read for School?](#)
168. [What's the Craziest Thing You Did as a Kid?](#)
169. [How Is Your Family Dividing Responsibilities During the Quarantine](#)
170. [How Has Social Distancing Changed Dating for Teenagers?](#)
171. [Do You Believe in Ghosts?](#)
172. [What Issues in the 2020 Presidential Race Are Most Important to You?](#)
173. [Do You Prefer to Dwell in the Past, Live in the Present or Dream of the Future?](#)
174. [Does the Future of Robots Get You Excited, or Fill You With Dread?](#)
175. [How Do You Practice Self-Care?](#)
176. [How Will We Remember the Coronavirus Pandemic?](#)
177. [What Is Your Reaction to the Days of Protest That Have Followed the Death of George Floyd?](#)