

Prompt 10  
English 243  
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Why is the sky blue?

You don't have to be a scientist to have a scientist's curiosity. Take a problem in science and explain it using accessible, imagery-rich language. Remember in "The Same River Twice" how a certain species is described as being the size of a granddaddy's thigh.

Maybe go into something you've always been curious about, like how people are attracted to each other based on their senses of smell, pheromones. Or why people crave chocolate, especially women. The more curious you are about the question that begins your topic, the more lively and searching your prose will be. In exploring your topic, seek not only to explain but also to discover an idea that you could, perhaps, connect back to yourself.

Why is the river brown? Why do we gain weight? Why do we get the certain food cravings we get? What happens when bees form colonies and what does the queen bee do? How do sheep digest food? Explain climate change to someone who has no clue and put in lots of analogies and stories to make them understand and make them care. Explain photosynthesis to someone who has never taken biology. Explain Einstein's theory of relativity and give us an analogy in human terms.

Don't limit yourself to biology.. Tell us who and why might have built the great pyramids of Egypt. Explore what anthropologists mean when they talk about liminal space. Tell us about one of the voyages of Alexander the Great. Explain what happens during a solar eclipse. Why did Rome fall?

This prompt could turn into your essay 3 if you are interested in writing about your major or minor for a general audience, but the basic rule here is that you have to do a little research and try to explain something in fresh, engaging, readable prose.

Be sure to cite anything you quote. Include a bibliography.

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