Examples of AL Tasks

1. **[Art history]** Look at this prehistoric cave painting [attached reproduction shows a speared deer-like animal]. Imagine that you are the Ice Age artist who created the animal painting on the cave wall. What could have motivated you to create such a painting?
2. **[Physics]** An hourglass is being weighed on a sensitive balance, first when sand is dropping in a steady stream from the upper to lower part and then again when the upper part is empty. Are the two weights the same or not? Write an explanation supporting your answer to the questions. Write to a fellow student who is arguing for what you think is the wrong answer.
3. **[Mathematics, Physics]** Think of examples out of your own personal experience to illustrate the uses of vector algebra. You might consider such experiences as swimming across a river with a steady current, walking down an up escalator, crossing the wake while water-skiing. Use one or more of these experiences to explain to a friend the kinds of problems that vector algebra tries to solve. Use both words and diagrams.
4. **[Nursing, Nutrition Science]** Using layperson's language, explain to a new diabetic what is meant by glycemic index of foods and why knowing about glycemic index will help the diabetic maintain good blood sugar levels.
5. **[Philosophy, History]** Hobbes said that we are obliged to obey the state only so long as it guarantees our security. How would he react to compulsory military service in time of war?
6. **[Physics]** Assume that space scientists, working with sports clothing manufacturers, have developed a superflexible space suit that allows athletes to run and jump freely on extraterrestrial soil. As an all-world sports promoter, your uncle, Squeebly Rickets, decides to schedule an exhibition baseball game on the moon. One of the first tasks is to provide instructions for laying out the baseball diamond and outfield fences. But then he begins to wonder, how the lack of an atmosphere and the greatly reduced gravitational force affect the game? For help, he turns to you as an expert in physics.
7. **[Nursing]** Examine the attached unsorted data about Mat Smith, a stroke patient who is soon to be transferred from an acute-care facility to a convalescent center. [The accompanying data include admitting information, history and physical data, progress notes, nursing notes, and a social service report.] Based on these data, write a discharge summary for Mary Smith. Your audience is the nursing supervisor of the convalescent facility, and your purpose is to help the convalescent center provide the patient with optimal continuity of care. [Adapted from Pinkava, B., & Haviland, C. (1984). Teaching writing and thinking skills. *Nursing Outlook*, 32(5), 270-272]

8. **[Literature]** In the last act of *Hamlet*, Hamlet seems to have changed in several ways. First, Hamlet [development]...Second, Hamlet [development]...[Third,... Fourth,...]
9. **[Philosophy]** Socrates and the Sophists differed in their beliefs about truth. On the one hand, Socrates argued that [development]...The Sophists, on the other hand, argued that [development]...
10. **[Nursing, Medical ethics]** People suffering from schizophrenia or manic-depressive disorder should/should not be forced to take their medication.
11. **[Mechanical Engineering]** For the design application we have been studying, your design team has proposed four alternative solutions: conventional steel roller bearings, ceramic bearings, air bearings, and magnetic bearings. As a team, write a dialogue in which each team member argues the case for one of the alternative solutions and shows weaknesses in the other solutions.

Source: Bean, J. C. (2011). *Engaging ideas: The professor's guide to integrating writing, critical thinking and active learning in the classroom*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.