

The Past Year And Now Answer Key

A strong response should include:

- **Paragraph 1:** A clear reflection on the past year, showing awareness of personal growth or key events.
- **Paragraph 2:** Forward-looking goals or aspirations connected to lessons learned.
- Logical transitions between past and present.
- A hopeful or motivational closing statement.

Example Response: *Last year taught me to be patient when plans don't go perfectly. I learned how to handle change by adjusting to new routines and finding new ways to stay connected with my friends. This year, I want to use that patience to stay focused on my goals. I plan to try out for a new team and take more creative risks in my writing. I hope that by next New Year's, I'll look back and be proud of how far I've come.*

Teacher's Guide

Implementation Tips:

- Begin with a brief discussion about reflection-what it means and why it matters.
- Brainstorm "last year moments" together on the board to spark ideas.
- Model how to transition between paragraphs (e.g., "Looking back..." to "Looking ahead...").

Differentiation Strategies:

- **Grades 5-6:** Provide sentence starters (e.g., "Last year, I learned that...", "This year, I hope to...").
- **Grades 7-9:** Encourage specific examples, such as global or community events, alongside personal ones.
- **ELL Students:** Allow them to brainstorm in their first language before writing in English.