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Introduction

What should critical thinking and intellectual rigor look like in a high school Honors English class?

In the last 20 years, the percentage of LCPS students taking Honors English in high school has increased dramatically, from a small minority of our students to a consistent majority of students. This Resource Guide represents the convergence of two sets of instructional frameworks developed over the last few years to increase the level of rigor and clarify what the application of critical thinking skills and higher-order thinking skills should look like in Honors English classes. Both the Honors English Assessments and the Honors Core Units are designed to articulate a clear, coherent vision of intellectual rigor and engagement that is not about asking students to work harder in terms of memorization of more content, reading more books more quickly, or writing longer essays and more of them, but is about qualitatively reaching higher levels of cognition. It outlines not simply our goals for student thinking, but mechanisms for teaching students how to think analytically and creatively and for measuring the degree to which and the ways in which they have mastered those skills.

We believe that honors students are capable of more than what we currently ask of them, and while these frameworks are not intended to constrain teacher’s flexibility and autonomy, they can help provide the support in helping students to achieve higher levels of critical thinking. Our discipline of English addresses the most basic ways in which we as humans make sense of the world around us and convey our ideas to others. English classes should be environments in which students master the tools of analysis and communication and bring them to bear in making sense of their own worlds and expressing their own ideas. The function of literature in particular is to make meaning of the human experience, and English classes should be places in which we explore others’ ideas about the great questions of human existence, as well as help students develop and articulate their own ideas about these intrinsically relevant and meaningful issues.

Most high school students, and certainly all Honors students, are ready to move beyond simple comprehension of texts, being able to parrot back author’s ideas (or teachers’ ideas), memorize a sequence of events in a plot, or recall the definition of a word. They are prepared to, and should be expected to, do the following on a consistent basis throughout the year:
• compare and evaluate ideas (and the ways in which those ideas are conveyed)
• find patterns within and among texts (both thematically and stylistically)
• follow their own paths of independent inquiry
• locate and evaluate the quality and reliability of information sources
• synthesize information from a variety of sources
• develop coherent arguments of their own, which acknowledge and address counter-arguments
• analyze and explain how an author uses literary and rhetorical devices to contribute to an effect or achieve a purpose
• create works of their own that utilize these devices for their own purposes

These skills are not simply useful in academic settings, or to prepare students for college, but build the intellectual foundation for success in a 21st century global economy. To this end, the resources in this document are designed not as a prescriptive sequence of lessons, but as an instructional and assessment framework to guide teachers in creating the most intellectually engaging and rigorous classrooms possible.
Program Design, Development, and Implementation

Honors English Assessments

In 2010, in response to state requirements that all courses given a GPA weight or “bump” have a “commonly defined assessment,” LCPS developed an initial set of Honors Assessments for 9th, 10th, and 11th grade Honors classes, given to students in the spring each year. These initial assessments were modeled on AP English Literature and Language exams, with close reading passages, multiple choice questions, and analysis essays. After their implementation the first year, there were several significant concerns with these assessments from teachers and department chairs around the county. While they did help us as a department to focus more on textual analysis and to align our criteria for written communication, there were weaknesses in their use as standardized assessments. For the following year, the multiple choice sections were eliminated, leaving only the essays. Even after this change, however, the consensus was that these were cumbersome and inefficient mechanisms.

In 2011, the English Supervisor Dr. Michele Schmidt Moore, English Specialist Dave Arbogast, and the department chairs from each of the 13 high schools, decided to shift the Honors Assessments to year-long portfolio assessments, as they felt these would be more comprehensive and authentic measurements of students’ work over the course of the year. A committee of teachers and department chairs researched best practices in this area and built on the work of an existing county-wide committee that had been exploring these ideas. Over the course of the 2011-2012 school year, they developed directions, rubrics, and examples for a Writing Portfolio Reflection Essay and a Big Question Portfolio Reflection Essay. This new assessment was introduced to teachers in professional development sessions in August of 2012 and implemented in grades 9-11 that year. While teachers generally felt these were an improvement, there were specific areas that many felt needed to be strengthened. In June of 2013, a working group of 12 Honors teachers reviewed feedback from a county-wide survey and a set of ideas from department chairs, and made significant revisions to the program, including:

- Increasing the focus on reflection throughout the year in the writing portfolio
- Providing more resources
• Revising rubrics for both assessments to better reflect curricular goals and to increase the level of rigor
• Providing annotated anchor essays for both assessments, using student work from the spring of 2013, in order to clarify expectations for both teachers and students
• Renaming the final products as the “Writing Reflection Essay” and “Big Question Project” to better reflect the nature of the programs
• Renaming the set as Honors English Assessments, to avoid confusion about the role of the portfolios themselves (part of the process, but not the final products/performances)
• Differentiating the Big Question Project by grade level, with more structure, support and scaffolding for 9th graders, and increasing levels of autonomy as students progress each year
• Providing three options for the final product for the Big Question: essay, research paper, or multi-media presentation

Honors English Core Units – An Instructional Framework

In the fall of 2011, we convened a committee of veteran high school English teachers to develop Honors Core Units which would demonstrate the application of rigor and critical thinking skills in instructional and assessment practices in Honors classes. Over the course of the 2011-2012 school year, this group designed a framework and sample units for English 11 Honors. During the 2012-2013 school year, two members of this committee then led a year-long professional development cohort of English 11 Honors teachers from 12 of the 13 high schools to field test the sample units and develop additional units and resources for teachers. The other two committee members were part of this first cohort, implementing the units in their own classrooms and developing additional ones, and they in turn were responsible for facilitating professional development cohorts for English 9 and 10 Honors during the 2013-2014 school year, where teachers would be developing and field testing 9th and 10th grade units, adapting them to the needs of students at these grade levels, and developing resources for other teachers to use.

In shaping the core units, the committee focused on ways to foster higher-order thinking skills and tasks for students.
Cognitive Models for Higher-Order Thinking Skills

Two taxonomies of cognition are especially useful in considering the application of higher-order thinking skills in high school English classes. First, most educators are familiar with Bloom’s Revised Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, but it worth revisiting this in terms of the specific content of our courses. The table below illustrates examples of each of the 6 levels of cognition in a high school English class.

English Tasks in Bloom’s Taxonomy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>Trade drafts with a partner and score each other’s papers using the rubric, identifying specific elements he/she did well and specific elements he/she needs to improve and explain your judgments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthesis</td>
<td>Write an essay in which you agree with, refute, or modify the following claim. Support your argument with relevant and specific evidence and address any obvious counter-arguments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis</td>
<td>Explain how the author uses diction choices and imagery in the passage below to convey a certain mood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application</td>
<td>Place commas in the appropriate place in the sentence below.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Comprehension | Compare Beowulf and Superman as heroes: in what ways are they similar?  
|              | In what ways are they different?  
|              | Which of the following words best captures the mood of the passage below?  
|              | What problem does Juliet face in this act, and how does she plan on solving it? |
| Knowledge   | What country was Beowulf from?  
|              | What did Scout find in the tree?  
|              | What is a noun? |

It is important to note the relationship of content and skills at each level. While Bloom himself strongly emphasized that this was a taxonomy and not a hierarchy, the way we approach the development of higher-order cognitive processes in the classroom has profound implications for students. Much of the content of the ELA course of study spirals over time, so that students
build on basic skills to increasing levels of complexity and sophistication. Students begin examining basic literary elements of plot, character, and setting as early as the primary grades, and build on these in increasing levels of depth and sophistication each year, in addition to learning new concepts each year. In this way, much of the content we cover in our high school classes “should” simply be review, especially in Honors classes. However, the reality is that we often find ourselves re-teaching the same core content year after year, as students are unable to transfer, apply, or retain the skills and concepts they were taught.

Nevertheless, teachers must keep in mind that our goals at this level are the higher-order application of these concepts: our objective is not simply for students to identify an example of indirect characterization, or recall the definition of a literary device, but for students to explain how that indirect characterization contributes to the larger purpose (or theme) of a work. To do this, we need to ensure that they can perform the lower-order functions early in the units with clear instruction/review, but quickly provide students with models of this higher-level analysis, opportunities for guided practice doing this analysis with feedback, and assessments that measure their ability to explain how an author uses a technique to achieve a purpose.

The second model that is useful for thinking about our larger goals and how we help students achieve them is Norman Webb’s Depth of Knowledge framework. While this framework focuses not on the level of cognition, but on the complexity of the task, it can put these student products and performances in a context, so that we can scaffold students’ progress towards these more complex tasks.

Webb’s model divides all student tasks into four levels. DOK 1 tasks require students to recall, describe, or apply basic procedures. DOK 2 tasks require students to organize, summarize, and identify patterns. DOK 3 tasks require students to develop new questions, formulate and support arguments, synthesize new ideas, and create new works. DOK 4 tasks are long-term activities that require students to conduct projects and synthesize ideas from a wide variety of sources. (Source: http://www.dese.mo.gov/divimprove/sia/msip/DOK_Chart.pdf)
The table below gives examples relevant to high school English courses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Depth of Knowledge Level</th>
<th>Relevant Tasks in High School English Classes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Describe and illustrate how common themes are found across texts from different cultures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Determine the author’s purpose and describe how it affects the interpretation of a reading selection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Identify and summarize the major events in a narrative. Use context cues to identify the meaning of unfamiliar words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Recall elements and details of story structure, such as sequence of events, character, plot and setting.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from: http://www.dese.mo.gov/divimprove/sia/msip/DOK_Chart.pdf

Again, as with Bloom’s taxonomy, in most cases students need to master skills and concepts in level 1 and 2 tasks before being able to successfully complete level 3 and 4 tasks. However, we should not wait until all (or most) students fully master the initial skills before moving forward, as the more complex tasks can be opportunities to learn and reinforce these skills and concepts. Teachers should address individual weaknesses, but not keep the whole class from moving to the highest levels of task complexity. The DOK framework helps us keep our larger goals in mind and provides a structure for thinking about a progression of skills, instruction, tasks, and performances that enable students to achieve these goals. Note that most of the assessment tasks in this Resource Guide focus on DOK 3 tasks (such as textual analysis and writing reflection essays) and DOK 4 tasks (such as the Big Question Project and Socratic seminars addressing essential questions supported by multi-genre text sets). This is not to say that we should not be using DOK 1 and 2 assessment tasks (or lower-order thinking skills on Bloom’s taxonomy), but that those should always be used as instructional scaffolding or formative assessment on the path to these larger, more complex, and more authentic goals.
Habits of Mind

Beyond conventional curricular goals, we also seek to ensure that students develop a set of vital habits of mind that transcend not just the English classroom, but education in general. These work habits, attitudes, values, and ways of approaching problems will enable students to not only become effective students, but successful adults, employees, and citizens.

While many students enter English 9 Honors with these habits of mind already, our goal is to help all students master these habits before beginning a college-level English class (which may be AP Language in 11th grade, or AP Literature or Dual Enrollment in 12th grade). As teachers, our role is not simply to expect or demand that students behave in this way, but to clarify those expectations and support students in developing those habits, so that over time, guiding them and holding them increasingly accountable to demonstrating the habits in order to become responsible, independent adults.

Each year, the English office provides teachers with posters for their classrooms with these habits of mind on them, and teachers should begin the school year with a discussion of these expectations and what they look like on a day-to-day basis in their classes.

A poster articulating the Habits of Mind is available for anyone who requests them through his or her department chair. A discussion of these expectations and what they look like in our classrooms is one way to communicate the Habits of Mind to students each year.
Habits of Mind

As an Honors English Student, I

- Read widely and often
- Foster my spirit of inquiry; seek answers
- Make connections
- Reflect thoughtfully
- Refine my thinking
- Develop my capacity for analysis
- Write widely and often
- Revise deeply
- Demonstrate originality
- Work diligently
Honors English Assessments: Overview

In the Commonwealth of Virginia, all courses that are weighted must have a common assessment to ensure that students meet consistently high standards across schools and classrooms. In Loudoun County Public Schools, Honors-level high school English classes receive a 0.5 GPA weight (on a 4.0 scale), and we meet the state’s requirement through two, year-long assessments that are each meaningful, authentic, and provide students with useful, ongoing feedback on their progress over the course of the year. They are designed to be what Grant Wiggins calls “educative assessments” in that the act of engaging in the assessment activity itself is a learning experience. Though students will work on these throughout the year, and some of the component assignments will count as formative grades in each grading period, the final products or performances for each of these assessments will count as 25% of the final exam grade (50% together).

In the most recent revision of these programs, committee members have emphasized that the implementation and administration of these assessments over the course of the year should, to the extent possible, be seen and used as a natural component of what teachers are already doing in their classes, rather than as a set of additional requirements. Hence, the Writing Reflection Essay should be the culmination of the writing and reflection that students are already doing throughout the year, and the Big Question Project can be used to teach and assess research skills or help students develop oral presentation skills.
Writing Reflection Essay

The Writing Reflection Essay is the culmination of a year’s writing portfolio development and students’ on-going reflections on their growth as writers. In Honors English, students are expected to be writing a great deal and reflecting on these writings throughout the year. The Writing Reflection Essay will have the students gather evidence from their work throughout the year of initial strengths, areas of growth, and skills on which they still need to focus. The student will then write a typed reflection essay on this progress. This writing will serve two purposes for students: (1) for the student to recognize his or her progress over the course of the year and (2) to give the student an opportunity to synthesize documents into one larger reflective essay.

Big Question Project

The Big Question Project engages students in a process of increasingly independent inquiry over the course of the year. At the end of the first quarter, students will be required to select a Big Question which is, by definition, difficult to answer, or answerable in a number of ways.

After choosing or creating a Big Question, a student will seek out a range of “artifacts” that address this question over the course of the year. The teacher will offer the student a number of opportunities throughout the year to connect the work going on within the classroom to the individual student’s Big Question. The student will also gather material independently from a variety of sources which will also be collected in the student’s portfolio.

At the end of the year, each student will reflect on his or her individual Big Question. What answers could they come up with? How has the literature they have experienced influenced their ideas about their particular Big Question? The final Big Question analysis will give students a chance to synthesize sources gathered independently with the literary works covered in class and attempt to formulate an answer to their Big Question.
Honors English Assessment: The Big Question Project

Overview and Rationale

The Big Question Project is intended to enable students to formulate their own questions; find reliable, meaningful, relevant, and varied sources of ideas about these questions; and consider competing ideas and synthesize their own coherent arguments that are supported by evidence and address counter-arguments. These complex critical thinking skills are developed systematically not just over the course of a year, but in a three-year progression of increasing independence, from grades 9 through 11.

Procedures and Timeline

- Before the year begins, teachers at each school or within each grade-level cohort/PLC should decide how they will approach the Big Question in terms of end products: will it be an essay, a research project, or a multi-media presentation? Will you allow students to choose which format they will use?
- Teachers should begin in September by introducing the idea of a “big question.” In 9th grade, teachers may want to have students select from a small set of questions they know will have connections to the major works they will be reading during the year.
- Teachers should review with students likely places for students to find artifacts or sources of ideas about their big question. Below is a list of suggested artifacts and sources, divided into three categories. Teachers should help students consider what types of artifacts or sources would best help them expand their understanding of their big question.
### Types of Artifacts and Sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scholarly</th>
<th>Literary</th>
<th>Artistic/Personal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>References works like encyclopedias and dictionaries</td>
<td>Novels</td>
<td>Paintings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major periodicals (newspapers, magazine, journals)</td>
<td>Poems</td>
<td>Photographs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliable websites (.edu, .gov, some .org sites)</td>
<td>Plays</td>
<td>Journal entries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Television shows</td>
<td>Conversations/interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Movies</td>
<td>Blogs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Songs</td>
<td>Podcasts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Emails</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Students should select at least 2 artifacts or sources each grading period and complete some form of written reflection explaining how this source informs their understanding of their Big Question (see Resources section for examples). By the fourth quarter, they should have 8 sources to draw on when working on their final essay or project.
- Both the artifacts and the reflections should be stored in a portfolio that stays in the classroom, to ensure that students will have access to them at the end of the year.
- You may want to work with colleagues and/or your Library Media Specialist to help students answer the following important questions: where can I find answers to my questions? What kinds of sources will give me the most reliable information?
- For 9th graders, or simply at the beginning of the year to help students get acclimated, you could use the Bell Ringer activities to get students to come up with books, movies, songs, or other sources that would connect to their Big Question. You may simply want to require students to bring in their artifacts one day each grading period and complete the Artifact Reflection Worksheet in class. Or, if your students seem as if they can do this more independently and you don’t want to use as much class time on this, you could have students do these reflections on their own for homework each grading period.
- Prior to students writing the final essay, they should have time to review their artifact reflections and carefully consider the thesis they want to develop, the evidence they will use to support it, and any counter-arguments they want to address. See the Resources section for suggestions on how to do this.
- To the extent possible, the final essay should be typed in class with the teacher.
• Students may write in the first person (using “I”) in elements of the essay in which they are drawing on their own experiences or making personal connections to the ideas, but should not necessarily focus on this throughout the entire essay, as this should reflect their synthesis of other’s ideas.

• Teachers may decide at either a school or grade level how they want students to document their sources, and what will constitute acceptable sources. If you are using the Big Question project as a research paper, you may require students to follow all MLA guidelines for in-text citations and works cited pages. If not, you may have students attach their artifacts and refer to them in their essays as “Source A,” “Source B,” etc. In either case, it is essential that students introduce and explain the nature and identity of the source: is this an 18th century novel? (if so, by whom?) Is it a news article from June 2001 in the Washington Post? Is it an editorial? Is this a conversation a student had with his grandfather? (If so, who is his grandfather and how does his experience inform these perspectives?)
# Honors English Assessment Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grading Period</th>
<th>Big Question Project</th>
<th>Writing Reflection Essay</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1              | • Select a Big Question  
                 • Journal: “Attempting to Answer the BQ”  
                 • Complete the “Connecting Literary Works to Your Big Question” to connect big question to stories read in class during Q1.  
                 • Discuss: “Guidelines for Gathering Artifacts for the BQ” and “Acceptable Search Databases to Find Artifacts” | • Set up writing portfolio  
                 • Collect writing samples  
                 • Enter strengths, weaknesses, and Focus Correction Areas on My Writing Chart  
                 • Journal: Reflect on own writing (strengths & weaknesses) |
| 2              | • Gather 2 artifacts to use in support of BQ. For each BQ artifact, complete the “Connecting Artifact # ___ to Your Big Question” questionnaire  
                 • Complete the “Connecting Literary Works to Your Big Question” to connect big question to stories read in class during Q2.  
                 • Optional: Complete the “Connecting an Extra Literary Work to Your Big Question” | • Work on Focus Correction Areas in all new writing assignments  
                 • Enter strengths, weaknesses, and Focus Correction Areas on My Writing Chart  
                 • Complete one writing reflection (Writing Reflection Essay Planning Worksheet) |
| 3              | • Gather 2 artifacts to use in support of BQ. For each BQ artifact, complete the “Connecting Artifact # ___ to Your Big Question” questionnaire  
                 • Complete the “Connecting Literary Works to Your Big Question” to connect big question to stories read in class during Q3.  
                 • Optional: Complete the “Connecting an Extra Literary Work to Your Big Question” | • Work on Focus Correction Areas in all new writing assignments  
                 • END: Write Reflection Essay (for 25% of final exam grade)  
                 • Identify supporting documents as “Source A,” etc.  
                 • Should use quotes from original essays/writings  
                 • All supporting documents should be attached to the final essay |
| 4              | • Gather 2 artifacts to use in support of BQ. For each BQ artifact, complete the “Connecting Artifact # ___ to Your Big Question” questionnaire  
                 • Draft & revise BQ essay (including a peer review)  
                 • Identify supporting documents as “Source A,” etc.  
                 • Should use quotes from original essays/writings  
                 • All supporting documents should be attached to the final essay  
                 • Late April/Early May: Turn in BQ essay for grading |
Honors Big Question Essay Prompt

Look back over your big question, the artifacts you have collected to help you answer the question, and your reflections on these artifacts from throughout the year. Write an essay explaining the following:

- Your question, why you selected it, and how it may have evolved over the course of the year
- Your initial ideas about the question
- The artifacts you collected (use at least 4) and how each helped to deepen, challenge, or expand your understanding of the question
- Your current understanding of the answer(s) to the question, potential counter-arguments to this thesis, and any remaining, related questions your inquiry has sparked in you

Your essay can be structured as a narrative, a persuasive essay, an expository essay, or in any way that conveys the four main elements above clearly and coherently. Use quotes if you are taking specific wording from any of your older works (e.g. initial response to the big question, journal entries, artifact reflections). Attach all the documents you are citing to your paper, name them “Source A,” “Source B,” “Source C,” etc. and cite them in that way in your paper. The essay should be at least 400 words, completed in class, and typed. Essays will be graded according to the attached rubric and will count as 25% of your final exam grade.
Big Question Essay
Writer’s Checklist

Before turning in your Big Question essay, use the checklist below to determine if you have addressed all the necessary requirements of the assignment.

_____ My essay is organized in a logical manner. I included an introduction to the topic of my essay, sufficient evidence to support my thesis, and a conclusion that performs at least one of the purposes of that portion of an essay (restatement of thesis and review of support topics, synthesizing of the content of the essay, “selling” the reader on the essays claims, etc.).

_____ My introduction makes clear the question I selected and my answer to the question.

_____ I stayed on topic as I related my response to the question.

_____ I have developed effective transitions between each set of ideas.

_____ My essay includes references to three to four artifacts that will serve as evidence in the body paragraphs of my essay. I have been careful to distinguish between major and minor works in my references by italicizing or placing quotes around the titles of my artifacts.

_____ My essay is documented appropriately in keeping with the type of essay I have written and according the instructions I was given.

_____ My references to my artifacts are sufficiently specific. I have provided quotes where appropriate and introduced and explained each source.

_____ The tone of my essay is appropriate for the intended audience, my instructor.

_____ The voice in my essay distinguishes my writing from that of my peers. I recognize that elements such as the vocabulary I have chosen, the formality or lack of formality of my writing, and the stance I have decided to take in my essay all help to determine my voice.

_____ I have proofread my essay for spelling, punctuation, grammar, usage and mechanics errors.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>4 - Advanced/Exceeds Standard</th>
<th>3 - Proficient/Meets Standard</th>
<th>2 - Developing/Approaching</th>
<th>1 - Needs Work/Below Standard</th>
<th>Subtotal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Organization:** Introduction, Transitions, & Conclusion | • Engaging intro that builds background, introduces question and thesis.  
• Strong and effective transitions throughout essay.  
• Conclusion restates thesis, synthesizes artifacts, and argues the universality of the BQ. | • Intro provides some background/context for the question.  
• Transitions evident throughout essay.  
• Conclusion highlights thesis, summarizes artifacts and begins to argue the universality of BQ. | • Underdeveloped intro with little background info.  
• Weak transitions or inconsistent use of transitions throughout essay.  
• Conclusion acknowledges thesis, begins to summarize but may be unclear/abrupt. | • Ineffective intro. Does not provide background info for BQ.  
• Missing or ineffective transitions.  
• Conclusion is underdeveloped/No conclusion | X 4 = /16 |
| **Focus:** Thesis & Arguments | • Sophisticated thesis articulates a precise central argument that is supportable, arguable and shows depth of thinking.  
• Comprehensive and well-developed argument is built throughout the essay with related subtopics/assertions. | • Succinct and narrowed thesis; focuses on a central argument.  
• Consistent argument is built throughout the essay with related subtopics/assertions. | • Somewhat broad thesis that highlights an argument.  
• Inconsistent argument is built through the essay. Broad and general. | • Vague or hard to distinguish thesis.  
• Argument is underdeveloped or confusing. | X 3 = /12 |
| **Evidence:** Artifacts & Sources | • Uses at least 3-4 meaningful and varied artifacts that require the writer to assess and evaluate the supporting evidence  
• Textual evidence is strong and compelling.  
• Introduces and explains each artifact clearly | • Uses 3-4 relevant artifacts that support critical thinking.  
• Textual evidence is clear and relevant.  
• Introduces and explains most artifacts/all artifacts vaguely | • 2-3 artifacts used to support some critical thinking.  
• Textual evidence is generally clear and relevant  
• Introduces and explains some artifacts | • 0-1 artifacts used but they may be superficial.  
• Textual evidence is inconsistently used.  
• Textual evidence is not effectively explained or used to support the thesis | X 4 = /16 |
| **Documentation:** Conventions, Citations, and Format | • All sources are correctly cited as directed by the teacher (either in MLA format or as “Source A”)  
• Skillfully incorporates quotes, examples, and/or paraphrases to advance the thesis and build the analysis. | • Most sources are correctly cited as directed by the teacher (either in MLA format or as “Source A”)  
• Effectively incorporates quotes, examples, and/or paraphrases to support thesis and analysis. | • Most sources are not correctly cited  
• Inconsistently incorporates quotes, examples, and/or paraphrases to support thesis and analysis. | • No clear evidence of source documentation is present  
Quotes and paraphrasing are not handled correctly at all | X 3 = /12 |
| Commentary: Analysis & Synthesis | • Sophisticated analysis of the evidence to support and extend argument. Analyzes the how/why/what.  
• Elaborates to include specific details that enhance and express the writer’s critical thinking and central argument.  
• Artifacts are cohesively and sophisticatedly synthesized to support central argument and makes connections between artifacts.  
• Writer’s opinion and critical thought is clearly evident and developed and evaluates and refutes counter arguments. | • Evidence analyzed to support/extend argument.  
• Elaborates to show critical thinking and relevance.  
• Artifacts reflect a basic level of synthesis around a central argument.  
• Writer’s opinion is evident and developed throughout essay and discusses counter arguments. | • Some analysis of evidence. Lacks thoroughness and insight.  
• Some elaboration shown but rarely goes beyond what the artifacts say  
• Attempts to synthesis artifacts but may be too general at times.  
• Writer’s opinion is somewhat evident but does not exhibit as much critical thought/analysis. Counter arguments are identified but underdeveloped. | • Little analysis of evidence. Mostly summarizes artifacts.  
• Little elaboration shown.  
• Little synthesis.  
• Writer’s opinion is vague or general and does not exhibit critical thought. Counter arguments are not acknowledged. | X 3 = /12 |
| Expression: Mechanics, Grammar, Syntax, & Diction | • Strong mechanics, grammar, diction, sentence structure and variety.  
• May have a few minor mistakes but does not inhibit meaning.  
• A distinct and consistent writer’s voice is emerging through the use of varied sentence structure and sophisticated vocabulary as grade level appropriate. | • Good mechanics, grammar, diction, sentence structure and variety.  
• May have a few patterns of mistakes but does not inhibit meaning.  
• A distinct and consistent writer’s voice is attempted, although inconsistent and still emerging through the use of some varied sentence structure and attempts at sophisticated vocabulary as grade level appropriate. | • Meaning is somewhat diminished by consistent errors in punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and/or agreement.  
• A distinct and consistent writer’s voice may be lacking. | • Substantial errors in grammar/punctuation interfere with meaning.  
• No attempt at a writer’s voice or the voice is simply that of a student struggling with the concept of the assignment. | X 8 = /32 |
<p>| TOTAL | | | | TOTAL /100 |</p>
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<th>Criteria</th>
<th>4 - Advanced/Exceeds Standard</th>
<th>3 - Proficient/Meets Standard</th>
<th>2 - Developing/Approaching</th>
<th>1 - Needs Work/Below Standard</th>
<th>Subtotal</th>
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<td>Strong and effective transitions</td>
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<td>synthesizes artifacts, and argues</td>
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<td>the universality of the BQ.</td>
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<td>Intro provides some background/context for the question.</td>
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<td>Transitions evident throughout essay.</td>
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<td>summarizes artifacts and begins to</td>
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<td>argue the universality of BQ.</td>
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<td>inconsistent us of transitions</td>
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<td>throughout essay.</td>
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<td>begins to summarize but may be</td>
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<td>unclear/abrupt.</td>
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<td>background info for BQ.</td>
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<td>Conclusion is underdeveloped/No</td>
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<td>conclusion</td>
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<td>precise central argument that is</td>
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<td>supportable, arguable and shows depth</td>
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<td>Comprehensive and well-developed</td>
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<td>argument is built throughout the</td>
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<td>essay with related subtopics/</td>
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<td>assertions.</td>
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<td>Succinct and narrowed thesis;</td>
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<td>focuses on a central argument.</td>
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<td>Consistent argument is built</td>
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<td>throughout the essay with related</td>
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<td>subtopics/ assertions.</td>
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<td>Somewhat broad thesis that highlights an argument.</td>
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<td>Inconsistent argument is built</td>
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<td>through the essay. Broad and general.</td>
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<td>Argument is underdeveloped or</td>
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<td>Introduces and explains each</td>
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<td>artifact clearly</td>
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<td>Uses 3-4 relevant artifacts</td>
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<td>Textual evidence is clear and</td>
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<td>Introduces and explains most</td>
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<td>Textual evidence is generally clear</td>
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<td>Introduces and explains some</td>
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<td>artifacts.</td>
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<td>0-1 artifacts used but they may be</td>
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<td>No clear evidence of source</td>
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<td>Quotes and paraphrasing are not</td>
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<td>Commentary: Analysis &amp; Synthesis</td>
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|  ● Sophisticated analysis of the evidence to support and extend argument. Analyzes the how/why/what.  
  ● Elaborates to include specific details that enhance and express the writer’s critical thinking and central argument.  
  ● Artifacts are cohesively and  
sophisticatedly synthesized to support central argument and makes connections between artifacts.  
  ● Writer’s opinion and critical thought is clearly evident and developed and evaluates and refutes counter arguments. |  ● Evidence analyzed to support/extend argument.  
  ● Elaborates to show critical thinking and relevance.  
  ● Artifacts reflect a basic level of synthesis around a central argument.  
  ● Writer’s opinion is evident and developed throughout essay and discusses counter arguments. |  ● Some analysis of evidence.  
  ● Lacks thoroughness and insight.  
  ● Some elaboration shown but rarely goes beyond what the artifacts say  
  ● Attempts to synthesis artifacts but may be too general at times.  
  ● Writer’s opinion is somewhat evident but does not exhibit as much critical thought/analysis. Counter arguments are identified but underdeveloped. |  ● Little analysis of evidence.  
  ● Mostly summarizes artifacts.  
  ● Little elaboration shown.  
  ● Little synthesis.  
  ● Writer’s opinion is vague or general and does not exhibit critical thought. Counter arguments are not acknowledged. |
| Expression: Mechanics,  
  Grammar, Syntax, & Diction | Expression: Mechanics,  
  Grammar, Syntax, & Diction | Expression: Mechanics,  
  Grammar, Syntax, & Diction | Expression: Mechanics,  
  Grammar, Syntax, & Diction | Expression: Mechanics,  
  Grammar, Syntax, & Diction |
|  ● Strong mechanics, grammar, diction, sentence structure and variety.  
  ● May have a few minor mistakes but does not inhibit meaning.  
  ● A distinct and consistent writer’s voice is emerging through the use of varied sentence structure and sophisticated vocabulary as grade level appropriate. |  ● Good mechanics, grammar, diction, sentence structure and variety.  
  ● May have a few patterns of mistakes but does not inhibit meaning.  
  ● A distinct and consistent writer’s voice is attempted, although inconsistent and still emerging through the use of some varied sentence structure and attempts at sophisticated vocabulary as grade level appropriate. |  ● Meaning is somewhat diminished by consistent errors in punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and/or agreement.  
  ● A distinct and consistent writer’s voice may be lacking. |  ● Substantial errors in grammar/punctuation interfere with meaning.  
  ● No attempt at a writer’s voice or the voice is simply that of a student struggling with the concept of the assignment. |
| Visual: Pictures, Effects,  
  etc. | Visual: Pictures, Effects,  
  etc. | Visual: Pictures, Effects,  
  etc. | Visual: Pictures, Effects,  
  etc. | Visual: Pictures, Effects,  
  etc. |
|  ● Presenter has clearly and uniquely planned each element of the project and has used creative resources.  
  ● Highly effective pictures, sounds, and videos to support the argument, aid in understanding of the BQ, and keep the interest of the class. Are appropriate in tone/purpose. |  ● Presenter has clearly planned each element and used creative resources.  
  ● Pictures, sounds, videos support the argument, aid in understanding of the BQ, keep the interest of the class, and are appropriate in tone/purpose. |  ● Student has planned each element and used interesting resources.  
  ● Pictures, sounds, videos somewhat support the argument, aid in understanding BQ, keep interest of class, and are appropriate in tone/purpose. |  ● Student has planned but may need to revise some elements/resources.  
  ● Pictures, sounds, videos ineffectively support the argument, aid in understanding BQ, keep interest of class, and are inappropriate in tone/purpose. |
| TOTAL | TOTAL | TOTAL | TOTAL | TOTAL |
| /100 | /100 | /100 | /100 | /100 |
Anchor Essays

Below are anchor essays for each grade level, illustrating what exemplary student products should look like (in the coming months, we hope to include anchors for B, C, and D level essays as well). In the right-hand margins of each are comments made by teachers highlighting specific elements that demonstrate mastery of key skills. Before asking students to begin their essays, walk them through the prompt, the rubrics, and the annotated anchor paper for their grade level so that they have a clear sense of what you are expecting from them.

As you grade student essays or projects, refer back to these anchor essays and keep the following guidelines in mind:

- The highest levels of mastery described in the rubric do not indicate that students’ work in this area must be flawless or without any errors at all. Even in these anchor papers, there are a few sentences that could clearly be improved, but overall the essay demonstrates a clear and consistent level of sophistication with these sets of skills. At the same time, sophistication means more than simply a lack of errors: has the student shown a genuinely mature understanding of sentence variety, syntax, and mechanics? Is it clear that he/she knows how to use language to achieve a desired effect?
- Look for the number of sources, their relevance, and the degree to which students introduce, explain, and connect them to their larger thesis. Remember that the core intellectual task here is the ability to grapple with a wide range of answers to a complex question, synthesize their own ideas, articulate and support them clearly, and address any obvious counter-arguments. Ask yourself how well students have demonstrated their mastery of those skills.
- Make sure that students introduce and explain each of their sources, so that the reader has some sense of context for the ideas.
An Inevitable Porcelain Mask

Everywhere we look in life we see masks, shells and fragments of something that was once beautiful and pure, however, we seldom realize that the mask and fragments are just as noticeable on us as it is on other people. Masks aren't always for playing pretend or costumes; they can also be for real life when someone finds that they can't always be genuine with others. The need to put on a figurative mask comes into play when society, past experiences or family makes a person feel the need to hide what they're feeling.

The first thing people think of when they hear the word 'mask' is the word 'superhero' and the main reason for that are the various superhero franchises out there. What all of those people have in common with the ordinary person is that they put on this mask because they're trying to hide a secret. The difference is that a mask isn't always tangible. Most people who use a mask to conceal their problems don't use a tangible mask. They use a type of mask that makes them appear to everyone else as a different person. On the outside they will be all smiles and giggles, but on the inside, they are broken and weeping as if they have lost something important to them. First we have to ask ourselves, "why am I really hiding this secret?" Then we have to ask, "if this secret were to get out, who would be directly impacted?" These two questions are the sources of our masks.

A common topic that circulates throughout the media are topics that controversial topics that lead to heated debates on what is the "right side". Everyone has their specific opinion, and they chose to voice it or keep it to themselves. The people who chose to voice their thoughts have the confidence to do so because they feel that they don't have anything to hide or lose by doing so. The person sitting in the corner, not saying anything isn't saying anything because they believe in the opposite party, or what is dubbed "the wrong group", and they feel that they would be looked down upon if they say anything against the other people. Society has shaped us this way, giving us a distorted image of what is right and what is wrong, and there is no such thing as a right or wrong answer to the open ended questions that take up so much of our time and energy. I often find myself in the same situation as the people who are silent in this situation. I stay silent and I carry on with my own work, which would be spending time on websites like fanfiction.net, a site for writing, and deviantART, a site for various forms of art, both of which I am a member of. When I was on deviantART one day, I found a picture of a beautiful mask with
an electric blue eye. After I got over the amount of detail in the piece, I realized that there were cracks in the mask and that there was a person screaming as if in distress in the iris of the eye. When I really analyzed the picture, I realized that people put on a mask in front of society and that makes them more vulnerable to letting the secret out and releasing their raw emotions. This is the product of hiding for something too long, which often happens when the person feels that they cannot hide it anymore. In my analysis, I wrote, "The outside mask begins to crack and shatter, leaving the person who is on the inside completely vulnerable -- they are now subjected to society and anything else they were hiding from" (Artifact 2). Society plays a huge role into who we are as people. Some people pay more attention to what is deemed socially acceptable and what isn't, but almost everyone has changed their point of view because of something in the media. When we hide things because of the media, it's because of fear of what people would say or think of us. We fail to realize that this leads us to burrowing the secret deeper and deeper until it's not possible anymore.

Burrowing things deeper and deeper goes hand in hand when someone is trying to keep a calm façade in the face of their fears and worries, though keeping a calm façade in front of the society is a lot easier than keeping one in front of the people we love the most. Family is the word that pops into my head when thinking of loved ones, and it influences nearly everything I do, from writing to drawing. One of my own stories is centered around a boy who is hiding a secret, but the audience realizes what the secret is at the very end. In the story, I wrote, "He felt tears prick the back of his eyes, so he quickly cleared his throat and put on his happiest face. 'Oh no, Mrs. Greene. She's fine with it as long as I come home safe and sound'" (Artifact 3). With the dialogue alone, the quote wouldn't have made much sense with the current theme, but the fact that the protagonist is crying as he is responding to the woman, Mrs. Greene, foreshadows that the secret has to do with his mother and making Mrs. Greene happy. It is as if he is trying to convince Mrs. Greene that he is 100% okay for her sake, versus his own. He could go through his whole life, putting on a happy and cheerful face even though he feels as if his heart has been dragged through a dirty road, but it would have been worth it just to see some peace and ease in Mrs. Greene's life, who is revealed to be a very important figure in the protagonist's life. Why do we do a lot of things to hide things from society, but we do just as much to hide things from our family? But why? Why would we hide things from our family? Again, that depends on the situation and
the severity. More often than not, though, the reason we hide things from the ones who are closest to us is because we don’t want to see them suffer. Bearing the burden alone would be much easier than seeing them feel the same pain as you. Having them feel the same pain is worse than showing they matter farther and farther away for them.

Keeping things as far from other eyes as possible makes everything alright, doesn’t it?

Wrong answer. What you’ve done is make yourself far more vulnerable than a person who has just broken from the stress of keeping a secret. Keeping a secret can burden you internally for so long before it becomes apparent on the outside. Writing and art are one of the big things that I turn to when I find myself struggling to keep a positive outlook in life. Music is one of the things that I can really lose myself in and not care about what others think of me as well as be the real me, not what society and the people around me want me to be. A song that I was listening to one day really reminded me of myself and my mask: “I’m forced to fake. A smile, a laugh everyday of my life. My heart can’t possibly break. When it wasn’t even whole to start with.” (Artifact 6). The protagonist of this story has experienced a beautiful lie. They were in a false sense of security when the trust they had for the rest of the world was shattered. They feel that no one else will tell the truth anymore. No one will be able to coax them out of this shell that they have created from this experience. A new person has been created, one that symbolizes an empty shell. This new person doesn’t know where to go or what to do, but they do know how to keep things hidden away under lock and key. They are too afraid of the next person that comes along and could potentially take advantage of them. “Because of you I learned to play on the safe side so I don’t get hurt” (Artifact 6). An experience like someone taking advantage of you affects people differently based on how much you trusted the said person, but most people end up completely torn apart by the experience and they feel the need to construct a new identity – one that is stronger and can handle the next potential attack.

People can do a lot of things to hurt and attack another person’s self esteem. Hitting them right where it is sure to hurt them is something that isn’t to be taken lightly. It takes a lot to get someone to completely fall apart. In the story Macbeth, the idea that men are born without emotions is a distorted image of what strength is perceived as. The characters feel that men don’t feel emotions and that is the reason they are capable of evil and treachery. It is because of this ideal that men are forced to hide what they are feeling, and it goes back to what the society thinks of them. If they suddenly break down over something, they lose their respect and stature
as a man, but the way Macduff handles his emotions in the wake of his family’s death is a way that hasn’t been seen in Macbeth before now. “Dispute it like a man.” “I shall do so; But I must also feel it as a man” (IV.iii 2103-2105). Macduff is essentially saying that even though he is a man and, therefore, not supposed to display his emotions for the world to see, he is still going to feel the pain of losing his family in one day. He is going to carry the grief like any other person would, but in a quiet and reserved manner, whereas the stoic and icy behavior that people would expect from him. Hiding things from others doesn’t always have to be something drastic, but it is usually as a result of some outside force.

Outside forces are one of the most effective ways to get people to create their masks. The strength of the mask depends on the severity of the situation. In the short story, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, the main character, Sir Gawain, has a mask of his own, though it’s not as apparent as the other characters that were referenced. Gawain is portrayed as a knight who doesn’t always follow through with the code of chivalry, and the reason for that is that Gawain loves his life too much to put his life on the line – something that the code of chivalry demands at times. Gawain makes a promise with a Green Knight that Gawain will cut off the Green Knight’s head, and, after a year and a day, Gawain will receive the same blow from the Green Knight; however, when he goes to receive the blow, he flinches, showing that he isn’t as heroic and honorable as he makes himself out to be. From the beginning, Gawain has a mask of his own – one that shows his courageous and honorable side, when, in reality, he isn’t all of the things a knight should be.

Masks are a huge part of our lives as humans. Whether we realize it or not, we have all worn masks at one point in our lives. This year I realized masks usually come from a significant change in our lives that we can’t normally cope with. The mask appears to us in our hour of need and provides a solution for the time being, but it isn’t a permanent solution. While we can hide things from society, loved one and protect ourselves with it, it isn’t a permanent solution and it is sure to shatter into millions of tiny pieces that are unlikely to ever go back together like they once were. They will never return to the pure and beautiful thing that it once was, and if by some miraculous chance it does, the cracks will still be present, standing out like a reminder of the scarred past the person wearing the mask had. I’ve realized that I had a porcelain mask on for more than a year now and I’ve learned why I created this mask to begin with. Now I know that creating a mask will only make me more vulnerable as a person. I’ve worked to slowly peel...
the layers of the mask off before the already visible cracks become worse. The mask that I've created isn’t completely gone, and I doubt that it will ever disappear for sure. I've also learned that the scars from our past can never be erased.

Grading Notes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>4/4</td>
<td>Introduction, transitions and conclusion show great maturity. While one of the transitional sentences could have been polished, overall the writer demonstrates great skill with these elements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>4/4</td>
<td>Thesis clearly conveys the central argument and argument is exceptionally well-developed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence</td>
<td>4/4</td>
<td>Plenty of relevant, clearly explained supporting examples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documentation</td>
<td>4/4*</td>
<td>Provides documentation for 4 of the 5 sources (last one does not reference a specific quote). It is clear the writer understands the conventions for citations, and sources are introduced and explained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commentary</td>
<td>4/4</td>
<td>Excellent analysis of the evidence and connection to the larger thesis. Connections between universal elements and personal life make it even stronger. Genuine synthesis of ideas is evident.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expression</td>
<td>4/4</td>
<td>Very sophisticated language for a 10th grade student: not simply that there are no significant errors, but proficient use of sophisticated syntax and punctuation patterns.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall Score: 100
*This paper was written by a 10th grader. Scores for documentation may have been a 3/4 for this paper at the 11th grade level.
Big Question Project Resources
# Honors English Assessment: Student Timeline Handout

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quarter</th>
<th>Big Question Essay (25% of Final Exam Grade)</th>
<th>Writing Reflection Essay (25% of Final Exam Grade)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **First Quarter** | • Select a BQ  
• “Attempting to Answer the BQ”  
• Complete “Connecting a Literary Work to the BQ” using a Q1 work  
• Discuss:  
  o “Guidelines for Gathering Artifacts for the BQ”  
  o “Acceptable Search Databases to Find Artifacts” | • Set up portfolio  
• Reflect on Strengths & Weaknesses |
| **Second Quarter** | • Gather 2 artifacts (independently)  
• Complete “Connecting Artifact #___ to the BQ” for each artifact (independently)  
• Complete “Connecting a Literary Work to the BQ” using a Q2 work | • Complete Writing Reflection |
| **Third Quarter** | • Gather 2 artifacts (independently)  
• Complete “Connecting Artifact #___ to the BQ” for each artifact (independently)  
• Complete “Connecting a Literary Work to the BQ” using a Q3 work | • Draft & Revise Reflection Essay  
• Turn in Reflection Essay |
| **Fourth Quarter** | • Gather 2 artifacts (independently)  
• Complete “Connecting Artifact #___ to the BQ” for each artifact (independently)  
• Draft & Revise BQ Essay  
• Turn in BQ Essay |
LCPS English Honors Assessment Project Handout

Over the course of the year, you will work on two on-going sets of assignments that will culminate in end of the year assessments, each worth 25% of your final exam grade:

- A Reflection of Your Progress as a Writer
- A Reflection on a larger “Big Question”

Writing Portfolio/Reflection of Progress as a Writer

This will be a culmination of your writings through the first three quarters of the school year. For this portfolio you will gather at least three writings that demonstrate your progress as a writer. The final piece is a two-page written reflection essay that recognizes this progress and synthesizes several documents into a larger piece. This will count as 25% of your final exam grade.

The Big Question – Individual Inquiry Project

By the end of the first quarter, you will be required to select or create an original “Big Question.” These Big Questions will be, by definition, difficult to answer or answerable in a number of ways.

Some sample questions:

11th Grade – Is it patriotic to protest one’s government?

10th Grade – What makes a true hero?

9th Grade – Is it important to show others that you care?

You will be provided with a list of potential Big Questions that you can choose from, or you could create your own. To begin this project you must complete the Big Question Generator Form.
After completing this form, you will reflect on your Big Question throughout the year. There will be several assignments and many opportunities to connect the work within our classroom to your Big Question. One assignment will guide you through the process of gathering your own material from a variety of sources to be included in your portfolio.

At the end of the year you will reflect on your Big Question. What answers have you come up with? How has the literature we have experienced in class influenced your ideas about your Big Question? You will have the opportunity to synthesize your own writings with documents gathered independently and attempt to answer your Big Question.

This portfolio assessment does not include much more extra work than the usual rigor of the Honors English Curriculum; it only asks students to think outside the curriculum and make a personal connection to it. Think of this as an opportunity to use knowledge from class in your own way and to push yourself intellectually.
Guidelines on Question Generation

1. Questions should focus on larger thematic ideas. In this case, think about abstract nouns. Your questions should have, at its core, a philosophy, idea or even an emotion that you can explore.

2. The questions should invite sub-questions to the larger question. For example, “Are we all alone?” invites the simple answer of “yes” or “no.” But it also invites follow up questions such as:
   - Why do people feel alone?
   - How do people try to escape the feeling that they are alone?
   - What consequences come from the impression that we are all alone?
   - How can we try not to feel like we are all alone?

3. Questions should be arguable, which in the context of this project, means that the questions are too large to have a single correct answer. If asked, you should be able to give two answers to your Big Question. In some cases, this may simply be looking at both sides of the argument, or recognizing the many possible answers to the question. If you can only see one correct answer to your question, then it is not arguable enough or you should broaden your perspective on the issue.

4. Questions should be broad enough to apply to more than one work we will study this year. Make sure to choose a question that can be explored throughout the school year.
Name ______________________________________
Block __________

Honors Assessment Project

Big Question Generator Form

You may choose a question from the list of samples, or you may create an original question. Complete the side of the form for your question.

**Question from Sample List**

Question: ____________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

Topic of Question: ____________________________________________________

What about this topic is important to you?

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

What are possible answers or explanations could you think of to this question?

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________
Write the final version of your Big Question:

Original Question

Think of an idea, philosophy or emotion that you feel strongly about. These could be abstract concepts like protest, hero, love, or hate.

Who else would this topic be important to? Why?

Create three sub-questions related to your topic.

Example: Emotion – Alone

Sub Questions: Why do people feel alone? How do people escape the feeling of being alone? Are there consequences for being alone?

#1. ____________________________________________________________

#2. ____________________________________________________________

#3. ____________________________________________________________
Sample List of Big Questions  
Grade 11 – American Literature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who owns the land?</th>
<th>What makes an explorer?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are people basically good or evil?</td>
<td>Who has the right to rule?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the price of progress ever too high?</td>
<td>Is it patriotic to protest one’s government?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does everyone have a dark side?</td>
<td>Where do people look for truth?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What divides a nation?</td>
<td>What, if anything, is worth dying for?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why do people break rules?</td>
<td>Is it important to face reality?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What makes a place unique?</td>
<td>Does the universe care? About…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How are women’s roles changing in our society?</td>
<td>Why are there have and have nots?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is “modern”?</td>
<td>Can ideals survive catastrophe?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can morals survive catastrophe?</td>
<td>How can people honor their heritage?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What drives or motivates human behavior?</td>
<td>Are Americans responsible for the rest of the world?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can America achieve equal rights for all people?</td>
<td>What makes an American?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How important is education?</td>
<td>Do generation gaps help or hurt us?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the American Dream still exist?</td>
<td>Is the American Dream still attainable?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is worth fighting for?</td>
<td>Why are we fascinated by the unknown?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is revenge ever justified?</td>
<td>Why do we hurt the ones we love?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What does a community owe its children?</td>
<td>What do parents owe their children?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How important is the idea of home?</td>
<td>What is the power of storytelling?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can a dream change the world?</td>
<td>Is a family’s oral history important today?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is privacy an illusion?</td>
<td>Am I my brother’s keeper?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How important is family?</td>
<td>What is the most important relationship we have?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which gender is the weaker sex?</td>
<td>Which is more important – the journey or the destination?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sample List of Big Questions  
Grade 10 – British Literature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What makes a true hero?</td>
<td>Who really shapes our society?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does fate control our lives?</td>
<td>Can people live up to high ideals?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should religion be tied to politics?</td>
<td>Why is love so complicated?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the ideal society?</td>
<td>Why do people seek power?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What can fix society’s problems?</td>
<td>Can science tell us how to live?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What topics are newsworthy?</td>
<td>What is a women’s role in public life?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What can people learn from nature?</td>
<td>Which is stronger: emotion or reason?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When is the ordinary extraordinary?</td>
<td>How does war change our values?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When is progress a problem?</td>
<td>Can values be imposed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is it better to face or escape reality?</td>
<td>Why do people fear change?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are we all alone?</td>
<td>How important is culture?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why is there always war?</td>
<td>Does every generation improve upon the last?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do people influence technology or does technology influence people?</td>
<td>Is fear our worst enemy?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is violence ever justified?</td>
<td>Which is more powerful: love or hate?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What enables humans to survive horrific conditions or events?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Sample List of Big Questions
### Grade 9 – Genre Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Big Question</th>
<th>Underlying Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is it better to fit in or to stand out?</td>
<td>What makes something valuable?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should you trust your instincts?</td>
<td>Is survival a matter of chance?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How can we achieve the impossible?</td>
<td>Is there a cure for grief and/or heartache?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How important is telling the truth?</td>
<td>Are role models important?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are old ways the best ways?</td>
<td>Is it important that you show others that you care?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does knowledge come at a price?</td>
<td>Is technology helpful or harmful?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is popularity important?</td>
<td>Can you recover from a tragedy?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can ordinary people be heroes?</td>
<td>Can you be from two cultures at once?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the definition of friendship?</td>
<td>Do world conflicts affect us?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are the little things really big things?</td>
<td>Can beauty be captured in words?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who are the victims of war?</td>
<td>What can we learn from disaster?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the news important in our society?</td>
<td>What do we owe others?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why keep what is no longer useful?</td>
<td>What would make the world safer?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do the ends justify the means?</td>
<td>What would you sacrifice for justice?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How important is wealth?</td>
<td>What makes a good candidate?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What makes a good leader?</td>
<td>What is our place in nature?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which memories are the most important?</td>
<td>What do we learn from experience?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does nature inspire us?</td>
<td>How can we change society?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whose life is it, anyway?</td>
<td>What is cowardice?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the signs of the times?</td>
<td>Can your conscience mislead you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What does it take to be a survivor?</td>
<td>Can allies be opponents?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can opponents be allies?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Big Question Artifact Reflection Worksheet

Name: ____________________________________________________________

50 points

Part I: Documentation and Summary (20 points)

Documentation of source 1 (list as much of this as you can now, but you will need to have a full citation later):
Title: ________________________________
author/artist: __________________________
Publication/air date: __________________________
Page numbers (if applicable) __________________________
Publisher/sponsor/source (website, news channel, database, etc.):

Explain what this artifact is, what it “says” about your big question, and how it conveys those ideas (in 2-3 sentences).

Documentation of source 2 (list as much of this as you can now, but you will need to have a full citation later):
Title: ________________________________
author/artist: __________________________
Publication/air date: __________________________
Page numbers (if applicable) __________________________
Publisher/sponsor/source (website, news channel, database, etc.):

Explain what this artifact is, what it “says” about your big question, and how it conveys those ideas (in 2-3 sentences).
Part II: Analysis (20 points)

Compare the two artifacts: how are the ideas they convey different? How are they similar?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Differences</th>
<th>Similarities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

In what way is each similar or different than other sources of ideas you have encountered about this topic?

Source 1

Source 2

How does each compare with your previous views, and with the artifacts you have gathered so far?

Do they reinforce your ideas (provide new evidence to support them)?

Do they expand your ideas (help to deepen your understanding of the complexities of the issue)?

Do they contradict or challenge your prior ideas, and if so, how do you account for these challenges to your perspective? (Do they draw on difference evidence or experiences? Are they based on different philosophical assumptions?) How does it make me reexamine my argument or my thinking? Will I use it to acknowledge the other side of my argument?

Source 1

Source 2
Where will you look for your next set of artifacts that may offer new ideas, new perspectives, or new modes of conveying answers to your Big Question? How will you be sure that you are staying open to new perspectives as you search for answers?
Name ______________________________________
Block _________

Honors Assessment Project

**Connecting to Literary Work Form**

What was the unit that our English class most recently completed? ______________________

Name two *memorable* literature pieces from the unit and briefly explain why they were memorable.

Choose two pieces regardless of their connection to your Big Question. These are pieces you may not use for this project, but would like to remember the highlights from.

#1) Title: ______________________________________________________________________

Memorable because:______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

#2) Title: ______________________________________________________________________

Memorable because:______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

Choose one piece of literature from this unit to connect to your Big Question.

Title: __________________________________________________________________________

Author: _________________________________________________________________________

Text/Reference Pages: _____________________________________________________________

What was this piece about? Give a summary of the major information we learned.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who: (Subjects, characters, speakers, narrators, etc.)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Topic:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How does this piece of literature connect to my Big Question?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible Answers to Big Question</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does this piece reinforce your argument or does it make you reexamine your thinking?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Guidelines for Gathering Material Handout

One expectation of Honors English in Loudoun County is that students are capable of independent inquiry. As a LCPS student, you will gather materials outside of class that deal with your Big Question. This material should be chosen from the larger world of ideas and should reflect inquisitive spirit.

Below is a list of possible materials you could gather for your portfolio project. Please Note: This list is NOT exhaustive. Work with your teacher to decide whether material not listed here is appropriate.

Types of Artifacts and Sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scholarly</th>
<th>Literary</th>
<th>Artistic/Personal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>References works like encyclopedias and dictionaries</td>
<td>Novels</td>
<td>Paintings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major periodicals (newspapers, magazine, journals)</td>
<td>Poems</td>
<td>Photographs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliable websites (.edu, .gov, some .org sites)</td>
<td>Plays</td>
<td>Journal entries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Television shows</td>
<td>Conversations/interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Movies</td>
<td>Blogs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>songs</td>
<td>Podcasts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Emails</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You are encouraged to think broadly as you decide what to include in your portfolio, but your material must be up to a certain standard. The material you choose should be thought-provoking, and you should strive to find ideas expand and challenge your thinking, not simply reinforce it.

Your material should:

1. Cause you to think and reflect long after you have read/viewed/experienced the material. Why did the author write this? What did my mother mean when she said this? Why is the subject of that particular picture posed this way?
2. Deal with the subject of your Big Question in an interesting and unique way. In your material, you should notice something that you have not seen said or expressed so well about your Big Question. The piece should make you say, “that’s an interesting way of looking at the issue.”
3. Lead you to change, modify, even in a small way, your thinking about the subject. The material should lead you to say, “you know, I think I understand my Big Question a little better now.”
Please realize that this does not mean you have to agree with the material. Sometimes the things that make us form the strongest opinion about something are the things with which we most disagree.

As the teacher, I will make the final decision on material appropriateness. I will also work with you to figure out a way to include material that will not fit the standard folder. For example, video clips, sculptures or entire books.

Remember the main idea of this individual inquiry project. You are making connections outside of the classroom curriculum to the larger world of ideas.
Connecting Independent Research Form

When gathering material for your independent research, make sure to refer to the guidelines handout you received to make sure your material is appropriate.

Title of Piece: _________________________________________________________________

Author: ______________________________________________________________________

Other Citation Information if Applicable (web address, publisher)
______________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________
________________________

Type of Piece (original reflection writing, article, poem, etc.): ___________________________

What is this piece about? Summarize the topic and give some of the basic information.
______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

How does this piece of literature connect to my Big Question?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible Answers to Big Question</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does this piece reinforce your argument or does it make you reexamine your thinking?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Name ________________________________

Block ________

Honors Assessment Project

**Bell Ringer Activity: Book**

This activity will be collected and assessed using the formative scale. When it is returned to you make sure to put it in the Portfolio Section of your English Binder.

What is your big question?

_________________________________________________________

Think of one book that addresses the topic of your Big Question.

Title: __________________________________________________

Artist: _________________________________________________

Briefly describe what the book is about?

________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

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________________________________________________________________
How does this book apply to your Big Question?

__________________________________________________________________

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Name __________________________

Block ________

Honors Assessment Project

Bell Ringer Activity: Movie

This activity will be collected and assessed using the formative scale. When it is returned to you make sure to put it in the Portfolio Section of your English Binder.

What is your big question?
__________________________________________________________________

Think of one movie that addresses the topic of your Big Question.

Title: _____________________________________________________________

Artist: __________________________________________________________________

Briefly describe what the movie is about?
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
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__________________________________________________________________
How does this movie apply to your Big Question?

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______________________________________________________________________________
Name ________________________________
Block _________

Honors Assessment Project

**Bell Ringer Activity: Song**

This activity will be collected and assessed using the formative scale. When it is returned to you make sure to put it in the Portfolio Section of your English Binder.

What is your big question?
______________________________________________________________

Think of one song that addresses the topic of your Big Question.

Title: ____________________________________________________________

Artist: __________________________________________________________________

Briefly describe what the song is about?
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
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____________________________________________________________________
How does this song apply to your Big Question?

__________________________________________________________________

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Name ______________________________________

Block __________

Honors Assessment Project

**Bell Ringer Activity: News Story**

This activity will be collected and assessed using the formative scale. When it is returned to you make sure to put it in the Portfolio Section of your English Binder.

What is your big question?

________________________________________________________________________

Think of one news story from the past 6 months that addresses the topic of your Big Question.

Where did you see the article?: ________________________________________________

Briefly describe what the news story is about?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
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________________________________________________________________________
How does this news story apply to your Big Question?

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English Honors Assessment: Writing Reflection Essay

Overview and Rationale

Students in Honors English classes should be writing every day; they should be getting targeted instruction in grammar, mechanics, punctuation and usage that contribute to the quality of their writing; they should be receiving clear, meaningful and useful feedback on their writing; and they should bring all of these experiences to bear in periodically reflecting on their growth as writers. The writing portfolio, on-going reflection activities, and final Writing Reflection Essay provide a structure designed to optimize the effectiveness of all of the writing instruction and feedback.

The Writing Reflection Essay will be a culmination of students’ writings through the first three quarters. Students will gather their writing throughout the year in a portfolio to be housed in the classroom. At the end of 3rd quarter, students will select at least three of these writings that indicate an individual student’s progress as a writer. The student will then write an approximately two-page reflection on this progress. This writing will serve two purposes for students: (1) for the student to recognize his or her progress over the course of the year and (2) to give the student an opportunity to synthesize documents into one larger reflective essay. This reflection on their progress as writers will count as 25% of the final exam grade.
Procedures and Timeline

At the start of the year, teachers should assist students in setting up writing portfolios that include a writing progress chart (see Resources). Students should include all graded writing assignments in their portfolios. As students get each assignment back, they should complete the strength and weakness section of the chart. At the end of each grading period, students should review this chart and select two sets of skills they will focus on developing in the coming grading period. Teachers may want to explicitly include these Focus Correction Areas in their grading of subsequent assignments, to hold both themselves and students accountable for the timely development of these skills. Each student would write down on their rubric what their latest FCA was, and teachers would grade students individually on those elements (in addition to the common elements on the rubric).

By the end of the third grading period, students will write a Writing Reflection Essay in which they explain and illustrate their growth as writers over the course of the year. Teachers should decide either as a department or as grade-level cohorts whether to approach this culminating assignment as a process piece (in which students write drafts, get feedback from peers and their teacher, and then submit a polished final draft) or as an in-class essay timed writing assignment spanning one block. One the one hand, as a process piece, the task is a more authentic reflection of real-life writing situations, students will likely learn more while engaging in the process, and students will produce higher quality products. On the other hand, giving an in-class timed essay assessment (after allowing time for pre-writing previously) will give a snapshot of a student’s mastery of writing skills. Both are valid modes of assessment.

Notes

- Schools have discretion in determining the level of formality of the finished product. However, please be sure to make this expectation clear to students so your grading is consistent.
- Ask students to select a “Focus Correction Area” at the conclusion of each quarter. These Focus Correction Areas” can be referenced in their final reflective essay.
• Teachers interested in having students maintain e-portfolios are encouraged to do so, as this will facilitate our transition to one-to-one computing in the near future. See your TRT for assistance with this.
• Establish voice by having students choose essay titles for their writing.
Honors Writing Portfolio Reflection Essay Prompt

After carefully reviewing the writing you have done over the course of the year, write a reflection essay that demonstrates your understanding of a) your strengths as a writer, b) the areas in which you have grown as a writer this year, and c) the skills you need to work on in the fourth marking period. Your essay should be structured as an argument, and as such, it should include a thesis statement and specific textual evidence (quotes) from your work throughout the year to support that thesis. An exemplary essay will also demonstrate a strong awareness of how specific aspects of writing (thesis statements, transitions, evidence, figurative language, diction, etc.) create an overall effect (meaning, tone, etc.).

You will attach the documents you are citing to your paper, name them “Source A,” “Source B,” “Source C,” etc. and cite them in that way in your paper. The essay should be between 400 and 500 words, completed in class, and typed. Essays will be graded according to the attached rubric and will count as 25% of your final exam grade.
## Writing Reflection Essay Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introspection and Depth</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • clearly links evidence with growth of writing skills by addressing the significance of their strengths and weaknesses  
• demonstrates a strong awareness of how specific aspects of writing (thesis statements, transitions, evidence, figurative language, diction, etc.) create an overall effect (meaning, tone, etc.)  
• deeply explores personal growth, challenges, and insights; demonstrates a great deal of introspection and self-awareness, and comes across as quite honest and thoughtful | • links evidence with growth of writing skills by addressing the significance of their strengths and weaknesses  
• demonstrates an awareness of how specific aspects of writing create an overall effect  
• explores personal growth, challenges, and insights; demonstrates some introspection and self-awareness, and comes across as honest and thoughtful | • somewhat links evidence with growth of writing skills by addressing the significance of their strengths and weaknesses  
• may demonstrate some awareness of how aspects of writing create an overall effect  
• somewhat explores areas of personal growth, challenges, and insights; demonstrates little introspection and self-awareness; may come across as honest and thoughtful | • rarely, if at all, links evidence with growth of writing skills; rarely addresses the significance of their strengths and weaknesses  
• demonstrates almost no awareness of how aspects of writing create an overall effect  
• generally fails to explore personal growth, challenges, and insights except in a very general or obtuse way; fails to demonstrate real introspection; demonstrates little self-awareness; and may come across as either perfunctory or possibly insincere | | \( \times 6 = \frac{6}{24} \) |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support and Evidence</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • refers to specific aspects of writing growth  
• effectively synthesizes information from at least 3 sources of student writing  
• assertions are precisely and thoroughly supported by specific and appropriate references to the sources  
• references to sources are clearly labeled in accordance with the prompt | • refers to some specific aspects of writing growth  
• somewhat synthesizes information from 3 sources of student writing  
• assertions are generally supported by specific and appropriate references to the sources  
• references to sources are labeled in accordance with the prompt | • refers to a few specific aspects of writing growth  
• synthesizes information from 2 sources of student writing; the synthesis is generally superficial  
• assertions are supported by references, though some references are vague or inappropriate  
• references to sources are sometimes but not always labeled in accordance with the prompt | • refers to mostly generalized aspects of writing growth  
• may mention 1 or 2 sources but does little to synthesize them  
• assertions are rarely if ever supported by references to the sources, or most of the references either vague or inappropriate  
• may not be clearly labeled in accordance with the prompt | | \( \times 6 = \frac{6}{24} \) |

* Students who use less than 2 sources cannot score higher than a “1” on the overall score.
## Writing Reflection Essay Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization and Focus</th>
<th>Organization and focus are consistent; in other words, the reflection is of a piece and not a laundry list of lessons learned</th>
<th>Organization and focus are generally consistent; the reflection, for instance, does not resemble a laundry list of lessons learned</th>
<th>Organization and focus are not always consistent; the reflection in many places may resemble a laundry list of lessons learned</th>
<th>Organization or focus may be almost completely lacking; the reflection may contain little evidence of an organizational technique</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• chosen organizational technique (overarching metaphor or narrative, for instance) complements the content</td>
<td>• chosen organizational technique (overarching metaphor or narrative, for instance) may feel somewhat mechanical but does not detract from the content</td>
<td>• chosen organizational technique (overarching metaphor or narrative, for instance) but feels mechanical and may detract from the content</td>
<td>• chosen organizational technique (overarching metaphor or narrative, for instance) but feels mechanical and may detract from the content</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tone and Voice</td>
<td>• uses a consistent and engaging tone appropriate to its audience and purpose</td>
<td>• demonstrates a sincere, but not fully engaged voice; there are moments where the writer takes a risk that shows who they are and what they think</td>
<td>• sometimes uses an inappropriate tone for the audience and purpose</td>
<td>• uses an inappropriate tone for the audience and purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• demonstrates an individual, compelling, and engaging voice; writer takes a risk by showing who they are and what they think</td>
<td>• demonstrates a sincere voice in some places, but that voice is not heard consistently; there are few moments where the writer takes a risk that shows who they are and what they think</td>
<td>• demonstrates an indifferent, uninvolved voice; writing is routine and risk-free</td>
<td>• demonstrates a sincere voice in some places, but that voice is not heard consistently; there are few moments where the writer takes a risk that shows who they are and what they think</td>
<td>• demonstrates a sincere voice in some places, but that voice is not heard consistently; there are few moments where the writer takes a risk that shows who they are and what they think</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar, Usage, Mechanics</td>
<td>• demonstrates mastery of the writing conventions stated in the curriculum guide (See the Writing Strand for your grade.)</td>
<td>• demonstrates competence in the writing conventions stated in the curriculum guide (See the Writing Strand for your grade.)</td>
<td>• demonstrates struggles with the writing conventions stated in the curriculum guide (See the Writing Strand for your grade.)</td>
<td>• demonstrates significant difficulty with the writing conventions stated in the curriculum guide (See the Writing Strand for your grade.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• infrequent lapses do not distract from meaning</td>
<td>• lapses rarely distract from meaning</td>
<td>• lapses may sometimes distract from meaning</td>
<td>• lapses distract from meaning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL** /100
Annotated Anchor Essay

Below is an annotated anchor essay, illustrating what exemplary student products should look like (in the coming months, we hope to include anchors for B, C, and D level essays as well). In the right-hand margins of each are comments made by teachers highlighting specific elements that demonstrate mastery of key skills. Before asking students to begin their essays, walk them through the prompt, the rubrics, and the annotated anchor paper for their grade level so that they have a clear sense of what you are expecting from them.

As you grade student essays, refer back to these anchor essays and keep the following guidelines in mind:

- The highest levels of mastery described in the rubric do not indicate that students’ work in this area must be flawless or without any errors at all. Even in these anchor papers, there are a few sentences that could clearly be improved, but overall the essay demonstrates a clear and consistent level of sophistication with these sets of skills. At the same time, sophistication means more than simply a lack of errors: has the student shown a genuinely mature understanding of sentence variety, syntax, usage and mechanics? Is it clear that he/she knows how to use language to achieve a desired effect?

- Look for the number of sources, their relevance, and the degree to which students introduce, explain, and connect them to their larger thesis. Remember that the core intellectual task here is the ability to maturely reflect on their development as writers, as well as an understanding of how specific writing skills contribute to the purposes they are trying to achieve as a writer. Ask yourself how well students have demonstrated their mastery of those skills.

Note: In the coming months, we hope to develop annotated anchor essays for each grade level, and for A, B, and C level papers. We have more than 100 anchor papers compiled from schools around the county, but they still need to analyzed and annotated. If you are interested in assisting with these efforts, please contact your department chair.
Writing Reflection Essay
Anchor Paper

Over the course of my studies in English 9 Honors this year, I have improved upon writing transitions, word choice, and addressing the prompt throughout my work; but I still need to improve on word choice and syntax.

Though at the beginning of the year I struggled to write clear transitional sentences, this in now somewhat of a strength of mine. In my first Block Quote assignment, transition sentences were absent in most places. More often, a paragraph ended with a detail, such as “... the employment of the word ‘undermanned’ rather than ‘empty’ when detailing the oriole nest highlights that the nest has been completely abandoned.” This sentence neither brought ideas together nor tied them in to the next paragraph. However, I had improved upon this skill by the time I wrote my essay on Artemis, visible in sentences such as, “Most of Greece, however, portrayed Artemis not as a fertility goddess but rather as the proud, wrathful goddess of the hunt (Leadbetter par 6).” This statement connected the main ideas of one paragraph with the main ideas of the next, exactly what transitions are meant to do. Writing transitions is an essential skill in writing, as these statements help to create a flow throughout the piece and show connections between ideas. Thanks to all the extra practice on writing transitions this year, I was able to improve greatly upon this skill, which in turn helped me to improve the flow of my papers in other ways, such as how often I address the prompt.

This year improving upon how I address writing prompts throughout my work has helped me to strengthen each piece as a whole. Close to the beginning of the year, I would, on occasion, drift away from the original prompt and fill almost an entire paragraph with details before connecting them to the main idea. I began a paragraph by saying, “The narrator of ‘The Scarlet Ibis’ had always wanted a brother, but was disappointed by the one he had,” then continued later in summary to say that, “The narrator pushed his brother but did so out of pride and embarrassment,” but did not say until very late in the paragraph that, “Until Doodle was gone, the narrator had not realized how special Doodle was to him.” This statement was the first since my thesis that made a direct connection to the theme I was describing, let alone the broader prompt.
In my midterm essay, however, I explained each detail by connecting it to the prompt, and even used a direct restatement of the prompt as a transition to my conclusion from my final body paragraph, which read, “This is what Emerson meant when he said, ‘The only way to have a friend is to be one.’ This improvement in my skills as a writer has helped me to clarify my arguments and to stay on topic throughout each work. I established a flow in my writing using this skill and was then able to establish my own voice as a writer by improving skills such as diction.

Extensive work on learning new vocabulary has helped me to vastly improve my word choice in my writing. In the introduction to my first Block Quote assignment, I wrote that “[the narrator’s] pride later leads to Doodie’s demise.” Although “demise” may be a good word to use in some situations, it was not the appropriate word to use for a young boy such as Doodie, as it usually refers to the death of someone who is either high-ranking or powerful. However, as my understanding of words improved throughout the year, so did my word choice in writing, as seen in the short story unit test. Here, I was able to use newer vocabulary words more naturally, such as when I said that “[the narrator] wanted the quintessential brother,” and that “he would careen his brother’s wagon through the cotton fields.” “Quintessential” and “careen” may have been newer words but fit very well into my writing. It is important that I always choose my words carefully as they affect the specific meaning of my writing. However, I should continue to build my vocabulary and use it in my writing, as unique words will make my essays more interesting to read. Diction is one writing skill with which I have come a long way, but it remains among the skills in which I am still in need to improve.

Despite the expansion of my vocabulary this year, there are still times that my word choice is rather weak or elementary-sounding, especially in transitions between ideas. Examples of this include “Artemis worked hard to gain her place on Olympus,” (“worked hard” being the weakness), and the transition just before that, “After that, Artemis set out on her quest to become one of the elite gods and goddesses known as the Olympians.” “After that” was a rather elementary way to begin the sentence but could have been easily avoided with minor changes to the sentence. For example I could have said, “The next phase in Artemis’s journey to power would be her quest to become one of the gods and goddesses known as the Olympians.” This revision has a voice that is more
mature and professional, which will also make my work more interesting to read. To improve my working voice beyond simply diction, I can also begin to focus on improving my syntax.

As run-on sentences are not uncommon in my writing, this is another area in which I strive to improve. To do so, I can begin by removing information that is irrelevant or redundant. For example, when connected my second block quote to the Big Question, I began by saying, “The message conveyed by this theme, about using means other than fighting to overcome difficulty, is important to remember when trying to change society.” As I had just finished explaining theme, I could have kept this sentence brief by saying, “This theme against violence is important to remember when trying to change society.” If I wish to keep the reader’s interest in my writing, this is an important skill to get to my point faster and to avoid sounding repetitive. Once I have improved my syntax, I will have added to the many ways in which my writing has improved in just one year.

Although I still need to work on syntax and diction in my writing, my word choice, paragraph transitions, and adherence to the prompt throughout my writing have greatly improved this year.
Writing Reflection Essay Resources
Writing Reflection Essay
Writer’s Checklist

Before turning in your Writing Reflection essay, use the checklist below to determine if you have addressed all the necessary requirements of the assignment.

___ I stayed on topic and explored growth in my writing.

___ I demonstrated an understanding of how specific aspects of my writing affect the quality and effectiveness of my work.

___ I referenced at least three of my submitted pieces of writing from this school year. Each of the references was labeled according to the instructions given in the prompt.

___ I included specific evidence in the form of quotes from my work and explained each element clearly.

___ I explained how my growth as a writer, as evidenced by references to my work, positively affected the effectiveness of my writing.

___ My essay is organized in a logical manner. I included an introduction to the topic of my essay, sufficient evidence to demonstrate growth, and a conclusion that performs at least one of the purposes of that portion of an essay (restatement of thesis and review of support topics, synthesizing of the content of the essay, “selling” the reader on the essays claims, etc.).

___ I effectively used transitions to connect each set of ideas to the next.

___ The tone of my essay is appropriate for the intended audience, my instructor.

___ The voice in my essay distinguishes my writing from that of my peers. I recognize that elements such as the vocabulary I have chosen, the formality or lack of formality of my writing, and the stance I have decided to take in my essay all help to determine my voice.

___ I have proofread my essay for spelling, punctuation, grammar, usage, and mechanics errors.
Peer Critique Worksheet for the Writing Reflection Essay

Author: ___________________________  Reviewer: ___________________________

Use the Writing Reflection Scoring Rubric to evaluate your partner’s essay, writing their score for each domain below. Then give an explanation and supporting examples for your score and suggestions for improving these elements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Your Score</th>
<th>Explanation of your score, with examples (you can circle and number them on the essay)</th>
<th>Suggestions for improving these elements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Growth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Support/Evidence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tone and Voice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mechanics</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Writing Reflection Essay: Pre-Writing

**Skill Areas:** Use the list of skill areas to complete the Writing Reflection Essay Pre-Writing charts below. You are not limited to only these skills, but you should verify with your teacher before selecting other writing skills to insure your selections are appropriate for this assignment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Grammar</th>
<th>Diction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• hook/attention grabber</td>
<td>• capitalization</td>
<td>• strong verbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• thesis</td>
<td>• run on sentences</td>
<td>• mature vocabulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• topic sentence</td>
<td>• fragments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• concrete detail (specific examples)</td>
<td>• subject/verb agreement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• explanation/elaboration on examples (analysis)</td>
<td>• quotation marks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• concluding sentence</td>
<td>• comma errors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• restated thesis</td>
<td>• apostrophes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• transitions</td>
<td>• semicolons</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• parenthetical citations</td>
<td>• spelling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• addressing all portions of the prompt</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Improved Skills:** Identify skill areas that you have improved this year. For each, complete a row of the chart **AND** highlight the examples of evidence in each assignment in you writing portfolio.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill Area</th>
<th>Assignment Name (Example of Weakness)</th>
<th>Assignment Name (Example of Improvement)</th>
<th>Why is this skill area important to all good writing?</th>
<th>Why did you make this mistake in the first assignment? (Carelessness, didn’t understand skill, etc.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skill Area</td>
<td>Assignment Name (Example of Weakness)</td>
<td>Assignment Name (Example of Improvement)</td>
<td>Why is this skill area important to all good writing?</td>
<td>Why did you make this mistake in the first assignment? (Carelessness, didn’t understand skill, etc.)</td>
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**Skills Needing Improvement:** Identify skill areas that you still need to work on improving this year. For each, complete a row of the chart **AND** highlight the examples of evidence in each assignment in your writing portfolio.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill Area</th>
<th>Assignment Name (Example of Weakness)</th>
<th>Rewrite Sentence with Revisions</th>
<th>Why is this skill area important to all good writing?</th>
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</table>
Name: _________________________  English 10 Honors
Teacher: ______________________  Date____________________

Writing Reflection Essay: Pre-Writing
English 10 Honors

Skill Areas: Use the list of skill areas to complete the Writing Reflection Essay Pre-Writing charts below. You are not limited to only these skills, but you should verify with your teacher before selecting other writing skills to insure your selections are appropriate for this assignment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Grammar</th>
<th>Diction</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• hook/attention grabber</td>
<td>• capitalization</td>
<td>• strong verbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• thesis</td>
<td>• run on sentences</td>
<td>• mature vocabulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• topic sentence</td>
<td>• fragments</td>
<td>• sentence variety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• concrete detail (specific examples)</td>
<td>• subject/verb agreement</td>
<td>(sentence types)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• incorporation of quotes into original sentences (TIE)</td>
<td>• quotation marks</td>
<td>• active/passive voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• explanation/elaboration on examples (analysis)</td>
<td>• comma errors</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• concluding sentence</td>
<td>• apostrophes</td>
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<tr>
<td>• restated thesis</td>
<td>• semicolons</td>
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<tr>
<td>• transitions</td>
<td>• colons</td>
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<td>• parenthetical citations</td>
<td>• hyphens</td>
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<td>• spelling</td>
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</table>

Improved Skills: Identify skill areas that you have improved this year. For each, complete a row of the chart AND highlight the examples of evidence in each assignment in your writing portfolio.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill Area</th>
<th>Assignment Name (Example of Weakness)</th>
<th>Assignment Name (Example of Improvement)</th>
<th>Why is this skill area important to all good writing?</th>
<th>Why did you make this mistake in the first assignment? (Carelessness, didn't understand skill, etc.)</th>
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</table>
**Skills Needing Improvement:** Identify skill areas that you still need to work on improving this year. For each, complete a row of the chart **AND** highlight the examples of evidence in each assignment in your writing portfolio.

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Writing Goals & Progress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements of CRAFT – what good writers do…</th>
<th>Elements of EDITING – fixing mistakes writers make…</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ strong voice</td>
<td>✓ sentence boundaries</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ sentence sense/variety</td>
<td>✓ run-on sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ word power (mature vocabulary/use of</td>
<td>✓ fragments</td>
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<tr>
<td>metaphorical language/show, don’t tell)</td>
<td>✓ comma errors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ strong verbs</td>
<td>✓ subject/verb agreement</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ paragraphing for effect</td>
<td>✓ quotation marks</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ effective introductions/conclusions</td>
<td>✓ pronoun agreement</td>
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<td>✓ clear thesis</td>
<td>✓ pronoun vagueness</td>
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<td>✓ flow (sequence/coherence)</td>
<td>✓ capitalization</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ development/complexity of ideas</td>
<td>✓ apostrophes</td>
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<td>✓ effective transitions</td>
<td>✓ semicolons</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ special narrative strategies (flashback, time shifts)</td>
<td>✓ colons</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ strong dialogue</td>
<td>✓ italics</td>
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<td>✓ numbers</td>
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<td>✓ parenthesis</td>
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WRITING GOALS:

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<tr>
<th>Quarter 1</th>
<th>Quarter 2</th>
<th>Quarter 3</th>
<th>Quarter 4</th>
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</table>

WRITING REFLECTION:

My Most Challenging Writing Genre: (CIRCLE ONE)

Synthesis (Research) / Argument (Persuasive) / Analysis / Creative Writing

Why? ___________________________________________________________

My Techniques to Improve My Weakest Writing Style: ________________________________________________________________
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essay Type</th>
<th>Essay Title</th>
<th>Essay Focus</th>
<th>Strength</th>
<th>Strength</th>
<th>Weakness</th>
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Focus Correction Areas:

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<th>Essay Type</th>
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Focus Correction Areas:
# My Writing Progress Chart

## QUARTER #3

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<tr>
<th>Essay Type</th>
<th>Essay Title</th>
<th>Essay Focus</th>
<th>Strength</th>
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Focus Correction Areas:

## QUARTER #4

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<th>Essay Type</th>
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<th>Essay Focus</th>
<th>Strength</th>
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Focus Correction Areas:
Honors Core Units

Introduction and Rationale

The Honors Core Units provide teachers with an instructional and assessment framework for teaching high school Honors English courses. It is not a prescriptive sequence of content, or a set series of descriptive lesson plans, but a vision for what appropriate levels of rigor and critical thinking should look like in an engaging classroom. While it includes a wide variety of time-tested strategies, it is not simply an amalgamation of best practices, but an integrated, coherent whole in which each part contributes to a larger, synergistic efficacy. Essential questions are tied to a multi-genre text set, and students engage in textual analysis of these texts both thematically and stylistically. Students have opportunities to practice those stylistic techniques in their own writing, and engage in the full writing process with those works that include peer feedback. At the end of a unit, students demonstrate their ability to analyze and synthesize through seminar discussions and essays written about fresh passages.

The critical thinking activities described here are not intended to be done in addition to large chunks of lower-order instruction, but for the most part should be implemented in lieu of such instruction. Time is created for all of these rigorous intellectual activities by assuming that Honors students can and will read and make sense of text at least at a superficial level on their own, and do not need to spend class time reviewing texts at a basic plot level. While not all students in the class may be prepared initially for either these intellectual tasks or these work habits, instruction should be designed with these standards in mind, and students unable or unwilling to meet them should be supported in their additional efforts to meet these standards. In this way, the largest number of students possible in the class have the opportunity to engage in these appropriately challenging higher-order functions.
Thematic Essential Questions and Multi-Genre Text Sets

The thematic essential question anchors the honors unit, guiding students’ inquiry and analysis. The question should emerge from a major theme in the unit’s major literary work (anchor text), addressing an aspect of human experience that invites diverse and sometimes contradictory opinions.

An effective question is broad and ambiguous enough to accommodate a full unit of study and to motivate student inquiry beyond the unit and the classroom.

Examples of essential questions:

• How do you measure and maximize human worth?
• How does war affect those who experience it and their families?
• What does the future look like?

(From Jim Burke’s What’s the Big Idea? Heinemann Press, 2010)

After formulating the thematic essential question, the teacher should construct a text set that offers multiple routes into the question. A diverse but thematically cohesive text set allows students to access the essential question through an array of perspectives, some of which may confirm students’ assumptions about the question, and others that may challenge them.

The anchor text provides the thematic foundation for the set, while supplementary texts offer supporting or alternative insights into this theme. The set should encompass a broad range of genres, including short fiction, essays, articles, songs, and visual texts. The best selection will represent diverse, often-conflicting perspectives of the essential question, reflecting a variety of experiences and ideologies.

Typically, high school English courses are organized either chronologically or by genre. Reframing the course around essential questions with multi-genre text sets has many benefits. It helps teachers to draw students into the central function of the literary work, enables students to make deeper connections between the themes of the work and their own lives, and gives them a richer sense of the possible (and often competing) answers to these larger questions. Many of these cognitive activities represent the application of more higher-order thinking skills than conventional approaches that focus on individual works in isolation.

While there are many significant advantages to this approach, teachers should also be aware that this shift from conventional units means that concepts typically taught in genre-study units (e.g. drama, poetry, or non-fiction) or background knowledge about literary movements and cultural/historical contexts may still need to be addressed, ideally in as efficient a manner as possible without slowing down the flow of the unit.
Sample Thematic Essential Questions & Multi-genre Text Sets

Selected from Honors English 11 Cohort Units

Unit Essential Question  What do we owe society? What does society owe us?

- Does the Individual exist simply to support Society?
- Is Society simply a social contract individuals agree to for their mutual benefit?
- To what extent should our actions and decisions be driven by societal norms and values versus our own individual conscience?
- What is the role of shame (or the idea of sin) in a culture in general? What should it be?
- To what degree should we be governed by our own individual consciences as opposed to social norms, social pressure, or even laws?
- To what degree and in what ways are we responsible for others?
- Ideally, how should we prioritize our own needs and those of others? Should we sacrifice our own needs for others? If so, in what situations?

Anchor Text  The Scarlet Letter

Multi-genre Text Set  
- “On Rainy River” chapter from The Things They Carried, by Tim O’Brien (novel excerpt)
- “Young Goodman Brown,” by Nathaniel Hawthorne (short story)
- “A Worn Path,” by Eudora Welty (short story)
- Excerpt from The Trial and Death of Socrates, by Plato (written dialogue)
- Pie charts on federal, state, and county revenues and expenses
- Statistics on charitable giving
- “The Entitled Generation,” by Bill Keller (article)
- “Let’s Draft Our Kids,” by Thomas E. Ricks (article)
- “The Tragic Case of Amanda Todd,” by Maia Szalavitz (article)
- “Gender Policing As Bullying Ritual,” by Elizabeth C. Payne (article)
- “Public Humiliation: It’s Not the Web, It’s Us,” by Elizabeth Blair (article)
• Steven Colbert interview with Nikolas Kristof (video)
• Steve Levitt lecture on “superfreakonomics” (video)
• “Around My Way,” by Lupe Fiasco (song)
• Alfred Green’s 1861 recruitment speech to African Americans (speech)
• “The Colored Soldier,” by Langston Hughes (poetry)
• “Doghouse Diaries” cartoon on individual’s responsibility to society (cartoon)

(Chris Cuozzo, Woodgrove; Thomas Clawson, Woodgrove; Jameson Zoller, Potomac Falls; Megan O’Meara, Park View)

Unit Essential Question  What makes us human?

Anchor Text  

Brave New World

Multi-genre Text Set

• 1984 – George Orwell (novel)
• “The Pedestrian” – Ray Bradbury (short story)
• “Harrison Bergeron” – Kurt Vonnegut (short story)
• “The Unknown Citizen” – W.H. Auden (poem)
• “The Hollow Men” – T.S. Eliot (poem)
• “VISIONS: BIOLOGY: A GENETIC FUTURE BOTH TANTALIZING AND DISTURBING; A Small Leap To Designer Babies” – Sheryl Gay Stolberg (article)
• “Tinkering with Humans” – William Saletan (article)
• “The Pretender” – Foo Fighters (song lyrics)
• The Spy – Bertolt Brecht (drama)

(Heather Olis, Loudoun Valley)

Unit Essential Question  What sorts of influences does fear have on individuals and on society as a whole?

Anchor Text  

The Crucible

Multi-genre Text Set

• “Why I Wrote The Crucible” Arthur Miller
• Selections from the Journal of John Winthrop and other Puritan texts
• “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God” Jonathan Edwards
• “Dry September” Faulkner
• “Not Fear” Rafael Guillen
- “Hands” Sherwood Anderson
- “Peter and the Wolf” short film directed by Susie Templeton (Netflix)
- *The Village*, a film directed by M. Night Shyamalan (Jameson Zoller, Potomac Falls)

**Stylistic Essential Questions and Multi-Genre Text Sets**

Each unit will focus on a small set of stylistic elements (literary or rhetorical terms and devices). However, the focus will not be simply on the identification of these devices, but on analyzing what the purpose of a work is and how the devices contribute to that purpose. How, for example, do tone, mood, diction, imagery, symbolism, and characterization contribute to the meaning of a work, be it fiction or non-fiction? In this way, the focus is not only on, for example, explaining how Fitzgerald develops the character of *Gatsby*, but how that characterization contributes to the theme. It is not simply the identification of elements of the plot, but an explication of what that aspect of the plot means. Additionally, style analysis across multiple text sets prods students to identify discrete authorial traits and their distinctive value. Stylistically, what distinguishes Hemingway from Faulkner, Frost from Dickinson, Douglass from Lincoln? This is characteristic of the transition to Advanced Placement-level assessments, and is often a big leap for students to make when they move from English 11 Honors.

**Assignments**

Sample assignments on this section are cursory because of stylistic scope. Hundreds of terms could make the list, depending on texts selected. Strunk’s *Elements of Style*, the 11th grade texts, and numerous other sources provide stylistic identification, analysis, and assessment methods.

- Stylistic Analysis (e.g. satire, humor, sonnet, haiku)
- Plot, Character, Setting Components (e.g. foreshadowing, juxtaposition, dialects, dialogue)
- Theme
- Rhetorical technique/persuasive appeal identification and analysis in context of rhetorical triangle
- Group analysis activities
- Linkages to Creative Writing and Analytical Writing Tasks

We should provide frequent opportunities for students to analyze authorial styles which help convey argument or theme. Familiarity with rhetoric and figurative language should not be an end in itself, but a means toward understanding the author’s thematic and artistic intentions. The ultimate objective should be for students to compare, contrast, and connect the themes they have derived from a variety of texts with respect to the unit’s essential question.
Best Practices

- Prepare focused samples of style component to be examined
- Model and guide students’ stylistic identification process including contribution to meaning
- Provide practice opportunities for analysis
- Check for understanding of literary and language device terminology
- Emphasize the discovery of a text’s theme or argument based on style uses
- Model (with published and teacher-generated writing), guide, and provide frequent feedback and peer and self-evaluation opportunities for students’ writing

Stylistic Analysis

*Question: How do characterization, plot, symbolism and motifs contribute to a story’s theme?*

Literary analysis means more than simply identifying the use of literary techniques in a piece of writing. Like the parts in a car, each element has a function that contributes to the whole, to the larger purpose of the work, which we call a theme. In an effective work of literature, all elements (plot, characterization, symbolism, etc.) contribute to a significant, meaningful theme (or themes) that convey some insight into the human condition, or what writers have learned from specific experiences.

The way a character is developed, and the way we (as readers/viewers) respond to the characters, affect what we take away from the experience of the story, both intellectually and emotionally: we want good things to happen to characters with whom we sympathize, we feel for them when bad things happen to them, and sometimes we see how their flaws can lead to tragic consequences.

The events in the plot can illustrate what the author thinks about the human condition: do virtuous, heroic people prevail over conflicts, obstacles and villains? Are they brought down in the end by their own weaknesses, by the cunning wickedness of others, or both? Sometimes these events are the result of characters’ choices, and sometimes they are the result of outside forces, and this too says something about the basic ideas of human agency (to what extent do we have control over our lives?).

Symbols can also contribute to conveying the author’s larger meanings and purposes: does the caged bird reflect a Victorian wife’s oppression? Does a rose represent the inherent goodness and beauty of human nature?

As you read a story, pay attention to how you are responding to a character, and the details and characterization techniques that elicit that response. When significant events happen in a story, ask yourself what that events mean (what are its causes? its potential consequences? How might
these contribute to the overall message?). When you encounter elements that seem symbolic, consider how those symbols influence the way you interpret and make sense of the story. After finishing a story (or a chapter), look back and consider how all these pieces fit together into the larger whole: what is the larger meaning the author is trying to convey, and how do these elements contribute to it?
Sample Unit: Stylistic Analysis

It is important that Honors students not only know the terminology of literature and the definition that goes with each term, but, more importantly, how authors effectively employ those literary devices to involve their readers meaningfully in a comprehensive artistic experience.

**Essential Question:** How does literature represent experience, especially the human condition; and what is the relationship between each literary work and the reader who is involved with it?

**Anchor Text: Kesey, *One Flew over the Cuckoo’s Nest***

- What literary devices does Kesey employ to develop the reader’s empathy for – and antipathy towards - the characters?
- What devices does he use to comment on the human condition?
- How would the novel be different without them?

**Other Texts:**

- Atwood, “Siren Song” (poem)
- Dylan, “Like a Rolling Stone” (ballad)
- Eliot, “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” (poem)
- Eminem, “Lose Yourself” (rap)
- Gap jeans commercials (print/magazine: *Vanity Fair*)
- Jackson, “The Lottery” (short story)
- James, *The Turn of the Screw* (novelette)
- Kesey, “One Flew over the Cuckoo’s Nest” (movie)
- Kubrick, “2001: a Space Odyssey” (movie)
- Plath, “Metaphors” (poem)
- Wolfe, “The Child by Tiger” (short story)
**Stylistic Essential Question:** How do various literary devices specifically involve the reader in the experience the author creates? An Honors student must be able not only to recognize the elements and how they are utilized, but also to employ them.

Consider, but do not limit yourself to:

- Allusion
- Diction
- Irony (dramatic, verbal, situational)
- Metaphor
- Metonymy/synecdoche
- Personification
- Symbol
- Syntax
- Tone and Mood

**Textual Analysis:** Students will annotate for the specific use of literary devices:

- Atwood, “Siren Song” (poem)
- Eliot, “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” (poem)
- Jackson, “The Lottery” (short story)
- Plath, “Metaphors” (poem)
- Wolfe, “The Child by Tiger” (short story)

**Analytic Writing:** Students will conduct a close-reading analysis of one of the works above, and present that analysis in a four-page paper.

**Journal Writing:** Journal entries can be on a variety of topics, some related to the genre, some related to personal and or school interests. Journals or writer’s notebooks provide students with the opportunity to practice their craft providing a focus of their choosing.

**Creative Writing:** Students will write a poem or short story in which they apply as many as three (3) of the devices highlighted in this unit.
**Reflective Writing** Students will recall their past experience with reading literature and attempt to show through reflection the evolution of their critical thinking skills through the application of their understanding of authors’ employment of literary devices.

**Other Media:** Students will listen to rap music and a ballad, and visit print ads to see how literary devices are employed in a variety of disciplines.

**Socratic Seminar:** Students will present their marked texts for and to participate in a discussion about Kesey’s *One Flew over the Cuckoo’s Nest*.

Students will draw comparisons to the movie based on the novel, including how the movie’s director (Milos Foreman) portrayed key elements of the novel.
Stylistic Analysis Application Activity

Directions: Read Eudora Welty’s “A Worn Path” (page 8) and use the Dialectical Journal form below to document 8 significant examples characterization, plot, and symbolism and then explain how each of these contribute to the theme of the story.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quote (first two words…last two words)</th>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Type CH/P/SYM</th>
<th>Explanation of how the element contributes to the theme</th>
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Summarize the theme of this story in 1-2 complete sentences:

Write a thesis statement for an essay responding to this prompt:

*How do characterization, plot, and symbols contribute to the theme of Eudora Welty’s short story “A Worn Path”?*
Textual Analysis and Analytic Writing

Textual analysis forms the basis for students’ thinking, writing, and dialogue about the unit’s essential question and stylistic question. It encompasses text annotation, dialectical journaling, passage analysis, and formal analytical writing. In deconstructing and evaluating the expression of a theme or argument, students can better apprehend the tools authors use to persuade, inform, and move their audiences. As they progress from identifying these techniques to evaluating their contribution to theme and argument, students acquire a more critical awareness of effective compositional and rhetorical strategies. Ultimately, a reflective and analytical thinker can independently make thematic connections across a diverse multi-genre text set. This synthesis should generate unique insights into the unit’s essential question, expressed in formal writing, class discussion, and the Socratic seminar dialogue.

In many high school English classes, we find ourselves spending a significant amount of time walking students through the basic elements of a story (plot, characterization, setting, etc.), reviewing “what happened in chapter 5” or “what did we learn about this character in Act II?” This is generally based on the assumption that either students had difficult comprehending these basic elements of the text, or simply choose not to read on their own. As noted earlier, this Honors Curriculum begins with the assumption that students have the skills and work habits necessary to read course texts on their own and make sense of them at a surface level independently. Class time is then spent teaching students to analyze text at much deeper levels: looking at “macro”-level thematic elements in the text and comparing the author’s ideas to other ideas, and examining key passages of the text at a “micro” level, determining the author’s purpose and explaining how he/she uses literary techniques to achieve that purpose. While teachers may spend some time quickly reviewing the surface level aspects of the text, and should assist individual students who may not yet have the skills or habits to make sense of the text at this level independently, the vast majority of class time spent working with texts should be at the thematic and stylistic levels, not at the comprehension level. In addition, most of in-class reading assignments should come from the supplemental multi-genre text sets, not necessarily from the central, anchor texts.
As with all other elements, instruction and assessment of these skills should follow the pattern below:

- Direct instruction/review of key concepts (What is tone? How does an author establish a tone in writing?)
- Demonstration of new concepts in exemplary models (“Let’s look at how the author creates the mood in this passage”)
- Guided practice of application of new skills, with teacher feedback (“What do you think is the mood of this story? What clues, diction choices, or imagery contribute to that mood?”)
- Independent practice applying these new skills (Read this editorial and explain how the author’s use of ethos, pathos and logos contributes to her purpose)
- Summative assessment of the skill with a fresh passage (Read the passage below and write an essay explaining how the following elements contribute to the author’s purpose).

**Assignments**

- Annotation and close reading exercises
- Literary and language device identification and analysis in context
- Rhetorical technique/persuasive appeal identification and analysis in context
- Group analysis activities
- Literary and rhetorical analysis essays
- Synthesis essays

We should provide frequent opportunities for students to analyze how authors use literary and language techniques in both written and visual texts to convey an argument or theme. Familiarity with rhetoric and figurative language should not be an end in itself, but a means toward understanding the author’s thematic and artistic intentions. The ultimate objective should be for students to compare, contrast, and connect the themes they have derived from a variety of texts with respect to the unit’s essential question.
Writing analytically, students evaluate an author’s compositional choices and thematic intent while engaging a similar constructive process: refining a thesis, selecting illustrative evidence, distinguishing the writing voice, and unifying the presentation. Teachers should offer plentiful models of effective analytical writing, both in whole and in part (e.g., highlighting a specific and arguable thesis statement or an example of well-selected evidence). They should closely guide students’ writing through a thorough drafting and revision process, including teacher, peer, and self-evaluation.

**Best Practices**

- Prepare a multi-genre text set with strong thematic connections to the essential question
- Model and guide students’ text annotations
- Provide ample opportunities for analysis of shorter texts or passages
- Check for understanding of literary and language device terminology
- Emphasize the discovery of a text’s theme or argument
- Model (with published and teacher-generated writing), guide, and provide frequent feedback and peer and self-evaluation opportunities for students’ writing
How to Annotate a Text

What Are Annotations?

Annotations are notes on a text that record your interaction with the text, including:

- Questions
- Identification of patterns and inferences (themes, characterization, plot)
- Connections (text to text, text to self, text to background knowledge, text to other texts)
- Literary effects and devices that stand out as you read (figurative language, tone, mood, diction choices)

Why Annotate?

“What the reader gets from annotating is a deeper initial reading and an understanding of the text that lasts. You can deliberately engage the author in conversation and questions, maybe stopping to argue, pay a compliment, or clarify an important issue—much like having a teacher or storyteller with you in the room. If and when you come back to the book, that initial interchange is recorded for you, making an excellent and entirely personal study tool.”


How Do I Annotate a Text?

Writing on the text itself:

The easiest way to do annotations is to write directly on the text itself (though that is not always an option). When you can, you can underline, circle, or highlight words, phrases, or larger chunks of text that stand out, and then make notes in the margins about what these represent (Characterization!) or your questions about them (who is this?). Often, when a teacher asks you to annotate a text, he/she will direct you to look for certain elements like theme or elements that connect to a “big”/essential question.

In a textual analysis activity, pay close attention to the author’s use of words and question the effects the words have on you as a reader, and pose questions about what the words or phrases may mean. Feel free to use whatever abbreviations make sense to you to space time and space on the page (e.g. CH for characterization, TH for theme)

When you can’t write on the text:

Sometimes you can’t write directly on the text (for example, in a school-provided textbook or novel). In these cases, you can either write your notes on Post-It notes and stick them near the text you are reacting to, or you can write your notes on a separate piece of paper, organizing them by page and paragraph and indicating the specific elements by the first three or four words and an ellipses (see below).

Page 3  Para.2 “running quickly down…” CH: Pete
Sample Annotations

Write a commentary on one of the following:

1. (c)

She was almost through with her figures when she heard a car drive up to the gate, and looking out of the window she saw her two older brothers. They had spirited her over from the Catholic church, one week ago. Her family was not happy about the decision they had made for her, but they were secure. The next day, she learned that her friends had been killed in a car accident. She was devastated.

Tension

When she saw her brothers, she asked, "What’s going on?"

"We’re taking you to see your friends," her older brother replied.

"But we just saw them this morning," she protested.

"They’re not here anymore," her older brother said.

She was shocked. She had not expected to see her friends again.

2. (d)

Oscar spoke to the woman, "I understand your concern about the property. It’s a family heirloom, and we want to keep it in the family."

"But what about the person who lives here now?" the woman asked.

"We will make sure they are taken care of," Oscar promised.

"I just want to make sure my brother is taken care of," the woman said.

"We will do everything we can to make sure your brother is taken care of," Oscar reassured her.

3. (c)

"I don’t know what to say," the woman said.

"We’re all in the same boat," Oscar comforted her.

"What do you mean?"

"We’re both trying to take care of our families," Oscar explained.

"I understand," the woman said.

"But what about the future?"

"We’re planning for the future," Oscar said.

"I hope you succeed," the woman said.

"Thank you," Oscar replied.

4. (d)

"Why are you doing this?"

"I don’t know," the woman said.

"We’re just trying to make a living," Oscar explained.

"But you don’t have to do this," the woman said.

"It’s not easy," Oscar admitted.

"I understand," the woman said.

"But what are you going to do next?"

"I don’t know," the woman said.

"We’re just trying to make a living," Oscar explained.

"I understand," the woman said.

"But what about the future?"

"We’re planning for the future," Oscar said.

"I hope you succeed," the woman said.

"Thank you," Oscar replied.
Close Reading/Annotation Activity: The Pledge of Allegiance

All of you have heard The Pledge of Allegiance thousands of times in your lives. Take a moment now to re-read it more carefully now and annotate the text with at least 4 questions or comments.

I pledge allegiance to the Flag

of the United States of America,

and to the Republic for which it stands,

one Nation under God, indivisible,

with liberty and justice for all.

Note: “The Pledge of Allegiance of the United States is an expression of loyalty to the federal flag and the republic of the United States of America, originally composed by Francis Bellamy in 1892 and formally adopted by Congress as the pledge in 1942 The Pledge has been modified four times since its composition, with the most recent change adding the words "under God" in 1954.”

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pledge_of_Allegiance
Annotation Exercise

Read the following short story and annotate it, paying particular attention to examples of irony, foreshadowing, characterization and figurative language and how they contribute to the author's purpose.

The Story of An Hour
Kate Chopin (1894)

Knowing that Mrs. Mallard was afflicted with a heart trouble, great care was taken to break to her as gently as possible the news of her husband's death.

It was her sister Josephine who told her, in broken sentences; veiled hints that revealed in half concealing. Her husband's friend Richards was there, too, near her. It was he who had been in the newspaper office when intelligence of the railroad disaster was received, with Brently Mallard's name leading the list of "killed." He had only taken the time to assure himself of its truth by a second telegram, and had hastened to forestall any less careful, less tender friend in bearing the sad message.

She did not hear the story as many women have heard the same, with a paralyzed inability to accept its significance. She wept at once, with sudden, wild abandonment, in her sister's arms. When the storm of grief had spent itself she went away to her room alone. She would have no one follow her.

There stood, facing the open window, a comfortable, roomy armchair. Into this she sank, pressed down by a physical exhaustion that haunted her body and seemed to reach into her soul.

She could see in the open square before her house the tops of trees that were all aquiver with the new spring life. The delicious breath of rain was in the air. In the street below a peddler was crying his wares. The notes of a distant song which some one was singing reached her faintly, and countless sparrows were twittering in the eaves.

There were patches of blue sky showing here and there through the clouds that had met and piled one above the other in the west facing her window.

She sat with her head thrown back upon the cushion of the chair, quite motionless, except when a sob came up into her throat and shook her, as a child who has cried itself to sleep continues to sob in its dreams.

She was young, with a fair, calm face, whose lines bespoke repression and even a certain strength. But now there was a dull stare in her eyes, whose gaze was fixed away off yonder on one of those patches of blue sky. It was not a glance of reflection, but rather indicated a suspension of intelligent thought.
There was something coming to her and she was waiting for it, fearfully. What was it? She did not know; it was too subtle and elusive to name. But she felt it, creeping out of the sky, reaching toward her through the sounds, the scents, the color that filled the air.

Now her bosom rose and fell tumultuously. She was beginning to recognize this thing that was approaching to possess her, and she was striving to beat it back with her will—as powerless as her two white slender hands would have been. When she abandoned herself a little whispered word escaped her slightly parted lips. She said it over and over under her breath: "free, free, free!" The vacant stare and the look of terror that had followed it went from her eyes. They stayed keen and bright. Her pulses beat fast, and the coursing blood warmed and relaxed every inch of her body.

She did not stop to ask if it were or were not a monstrous joy that held her. A clear and exalted perception enabled her to dismiss the suggestion as trivial. She knew that she would weep again when she saw the kind, tender hands folded in death; the face that had never looked save with love upon her, fixed and gray and dead. But she saw beyond that bitter moment a long procession of years to come that would belong to her absolutely. And she opened and spread her arms out to them in welcome.

There would be no one to live for during those coming years; she would live for herself. There would be no powerful will bending hers in that blind persistence with which men and women believe they have a right to impose a private will upon a fellow-creature. A kind intention or a cruel intention made the act seem no less a crime as she looked upon it in that brief moment of illumination.

And yet she had loved him--sometimes. Often she had not. What did it matter! What could love, the unsolved mystery, count for in the face of this possession of self-assertion which she suddenly recognized as the strongest impulse of her being!

"Free! Body and soul free!" she kept whispering.

Josephine was kneeling before the closed door with her lips to the keyhold, imploring for admission. "Louise, open the door! I beg; open the door—you will make yourself ill. What are you doing, Louise? For heaven's sake open the door."

"Go away. I am not making myself ill." No; she was drinking in a very elixir of life through that open window.

Her fancy was running riot along those days ahead of her. Spring days, and summer days, and all sorts of days that would be her own. She breathed a quick prayer that life might be long. It was only yesterday she had thought with a shudder that life might be long.

She arose at length and opened the door to her sister's importunities. There was a feverish triumph in her eyes, and she carried herself unwittingly like a goddess of Victory. She clasped her sister's waist, and together they descended the stairs. Richards stood waiting for them at the bottom.
Someone was opening the front door with a latchkey. It was Brently Mallard who entered, a little travel-stained, composedly carrying his grip-sack and umbrella. He had been far from the scene of the accident, and did not even know there had been one. He stood amazed at Josephine's piercing cry; at Richards' quick motion to screen him from the view of his wife.

When the doctors came they said she had died of heart disease--of the joy that kills.
Textual Analysis Activity: “The War Prayer”

Directions: Read the short story below and write an essay of at least 300 words in which you explain how the author’s use of diction choices, imagery, and characterization contribute to his purpose. Your essay should include at least 7 examples, with at least one of each type. Use in-text citations to indicate the page from which each quote came: (Twain 3).

The War Prayer by Mark Twain, 1910 (Source: http://warprayer.org/)

It was a time of great and exalting excitement. The country was up in arms, the war was on, in every breast burned the holy fire of patriotism; the drums were beating, the bands playing, the toy pistols popping, the bunched firecrackers hissing and spluttering; on every hand and far down the receding and fading spread of roofs and balconies a fluttering wilderness of flags flashed in the sun; daily the young volunteers marched down the wide avenue gay and fine in their new uniforms, the proud fathers and mothers and sisters and sweethearts cheering them with voices choked with happy emotion as they swung by; nightly the packed mass meetings listened, panting, to patriot oratory with stirred the deepest deeps of their hearts, and which they interrupted at briefest intervals with cyclones of applause, the tears running down their cheeks the while; in the churches the pastors preached devotion to flag and country, and invoked the God of Battles beseeching His aid in our good cause in outpourings of fervid eloquence which moved every listener.

It was indeed a glad and gracious time, and the half dozen rash spirits that ventured to disapprove of the war and cast a doubt upon its righteousness straightway got such a stern and angry warning that for their personal safety’s sake they quickly shrank out of sight and offended no more in that way.

Sunday morning came — next day the battalions would leave for the front; the church was filled; the volunteers were there, their young faces alight with martial dreams — visions of the stern advance, the gathering momentum, the rushing charge, the flashing sabers, the flight of the foe, the tumult, the enveloping smoke, the fierce pursuit, the surrender!

Then home from the war, bronzed heroes, welcomed, adored, submerged in golden seas of glory! With the volunteers sat their dear ones, proud, happy, and envied by the neighbors and friends who had no sons and brothers to send forth to the field of honor, there to win for the flag, or, failing, die the noblest of noble deaths. The service proceeded; a war chapter from the Old Testament was read; the first prayer was said; it was followed by an organ burst that shook the building, and with one impulse the house rose, with glowing eyes and beating hearts, and poured out that tremendous invocation: God the all-terrible! Thou who ordainest, Thunder thy clarion and lightning thy sword!
Then came the “long” prayer. None could remember the like of it for passionate pleading and moving and beautiful language. The burden of its supplication was, that an ever-merciful and benignant Father of us all would watch over our noble young soldiers, and aid, comfort, and encourage them in their patriotic work; bless them, shield them in the day of battle and the hour of peril, bear them in His mighty hand, make them strong and confident, invincible in the bloody onset; help them crush the foe, grant to them and to their flag and country imperishable honor and glory —

An aged stranger entered and moved with slow and noiseless step up the main aisle, his eyes fixed upon the minister, his long body clothed in a robe that reached to his feet, his head bare, his white hair descending in a frothy cataract to his shoulders, his seamy face unnaturally pale, pale even to ghastliness. With all eyes following him and wondering, he made his silent way; without pausing, he ascended to the preacher’s side and stood there waiting. With shut lids the preacher, unconscious of his presence, continued his moving prayer, and at last finished it with the words, uttered in fervent appeal, “Bless our arms, grant us the victory, O Lord and God, Father and Protector of our land and flag!”

The stranger touched his arm, motioned him to step aside — which the startled minister did — and took his place. During some moments he surveyed the spellbound audience with solemn eyes, in which burned an uncanny light; then in a deep voice he said:

“I come from the Throne — bearing a message from Almighty God!” The words smote the house with a shock; if the stranger perceived it he gave no attention. “He has heard the prayer of His servant your shepherd, and will grant it if such be your desire after I, His messenger, shall have explained to you its import — that is to say, its full import. For it is like unto many of the prayers of men, in that it asks for more than he who utters it is aware of — except he pause and think. “God’s servant and yours has prayed his prayer. Has he paused and taken thought? Is it one prayer? No, it is two — one uttered, and the other not. Both have reached the ear of Him who heareth all supplications, the spoken and the unspoken. Ponder this — keep it in mind. If you would beseech a blessing upon yourself, beware! lest without intent you invoke a curse upon your neighbor at the same time. If you pray for the blessing of rain on your crop which needs it, by that act you are possibly praying for a curse on some neighbor’s crop which may not need rain and can be injured by it.

“You have heard your servant’s prayer — the uttered part of it. I am commissioned by God to put into words the other part of it — that part which the pastor — and also you in your hearts — fervently prayed silently. And ignorantly and unthinkingly? God grant that it was so! You heard the words ‘Grant us the victory, O Lord our God!’ That is sufficient. The whole of the uttered prayer is compact into those pregnant words. Elaborations were not necessary. When you have prayed for victory you have prayed for many unmentioned results which follow victory — must
follow it, cannot help but follow it. Upon the listening spirit of God fell also the unspoken part of the prayer. He commandeth me to put it into words. Listen!

“Lord our Father, our young patriots, idols of our hearts, go forth into battle — be Thou near them! With them — in spirit — we also go forth from the sweet peace of our beloved firesides to smite the foe. O Lord our God, help us tear their soldiers to bloody shreds with our shells; help us to cover their smiling fields with the pale forms of their patriot dead; help us to drown the thunder of the guns with the shrieks of their wounded, writhing in pain; help us to lay waste their humble homes with a hurricane of fire; help us to wring the hearts of their unoffending widows with unavailing grief; help us to turn them out roofless with their little children to wander unfriended in the wastes of their desolated land in rags and hunger and thirst, sports of the sun flames in summer and the icy winds of winter, broken in spirit, worn with travail, imploring thee for the refuge of the grave and denied it —

For our sakes who adore Thee, Lord, blast their hopes, blight their lives, protract their bitter pilgrimage, make heavy their steps, water their way with their tears, stain the white snow with the blood of their wounded feet!

We ask it, in the spirit of love, of Him Who is the Source of Love, and Who is the ever-faithful refuge and friend of all that are sore beset and seek His aid with humble and contrite hearts. Amen.

(After a pause.) “Ye have prayed it; if ye still desire it, speak! The messenger of the Most High waits.”

…

It was believed afterward that the man was a lunatic, because there was no sense in what he said.

Notes: “The piece was left unpublished by Mark Twain at his death in April 1910, largely due to pressure from his family, who feared that the story would be considered sacrilegious. Twain's publisher and other friends also discouraged him from publishing it. According to one account, his illustrator Dan Beard asked him if he would publish it anyway, and Twain replied, ‘No, I have told the whole truth in that, and only dead men can tell the truth in this world. It can be published after I am dead’ Mindful of public reaction, he considered that he had a family to support and did not want to be seen as a lunatic or fanatic.” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_War_Prayer)
Close Reading/Textual Analysis Passages in *A Raisin in the Sun*

*Note: The following activities can be used as models, in-class practice, or as parts of a summative assessment.*

Read pages 23 and 24 in *A Raisin in the Sun* and do the following:

1. Describe the **mood** in 1-2 words of your own and then identify at least 4 words/phrases from the text that contribute to that mood
2. Find 2 examples of **direct characterization**
3. Find 2 examples of **indirect characterization**
4. Describe the **setting** and make a prediction about how the setting will influence the characters and plot of the story.

Look through pages 25-26 in *A Raisin in the Sun* and find three examples of how stage directions are being used and explain their use in terms of these functions.

Re-read the passage on page 73 beginning with

“Mama: Yes, son-“

And ending at the bottom of page 75 with “Curtain”

1. Summarize this passage in two sentences.
2. Explain what we learn about the differences in each character’s values, perspectives and feelings, citing at least 4 specific examples from the passage (quotes).

Re-read each of the following passages and do the following:

- Summarize the events in one sentence
- Identify one example of how **stage directions help to convey a character’s traits or emotions.**
- Identify one example of **figurative language** (e.g. metaphor or simile)

**Passage 1:** Beginning at the bottom of page 71 with “Ruth: (Suddenly)…” and ending on page 72 with “Mama: She loves you”

**Passage 2:** beginning at the top of page 85 with “George (Looking at him…)” and ending with “Beneatha (Tired of the jokes…)”

Re-read the following passage and do the following:

- Summarize the events in one sentence
- Identify two examples of how **stage directions or dialogue help to convey the following character’s traits or emotions:** Mama/Lena, Ruth, Walter
Passage 1: Beginning at the bottom of page 92 with “Ruth: Where is it?” and ending on page 95 with “Mama: Walter Lee”

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Example of stage directions</th>
<th>What it illustrates about the character</th>
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<td>Mama</td>
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<td>2.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ruth</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walter</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
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<td>2.</td>
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</table>

--------------------------

Re-read the passage beginning at the top of page 127 and ending at the bottom of page 128. Describe the mood of this scene in 1-2 words of your own. Identify at least 5 words or phrases from the passage (either stage directions or dialogue) that contribute to that mood.

Explain why these events are so important to Walter in particular, both in terms of his own dreams and his relationships to Lena, Ruth, Beneatha and Travis.

--------------------------

Re-read the passage beginning at the top of 129 and ending on 130. Describe the mood of this scene in 1-2 words of your own. Identify at least 5 words or phrases from the passage (either stage directions or dialogue) that contribute to that mood.
Socratic Seminars

The Socratic seminar allows students to verbally share, evaluate, and question insights from their individual textual analyses. The opportunity to exchange ideas with their peers is a powerful incentive for each student to prepare a thorough and reflective analysis of unit texts. Seminar preparation entails a close synthesis of the unit’s multi-genre text set with respect to the essential question and the stylistic question. Because they represent such intellectually demanding and public displays of analytic ability, they are also excellent accountability mechanisms for students, as it should be extremely difficult for a student to participate fully through a well-designed seminar if he/she has not adequately prepared (i.e. read and annotated the text carefully). The seminar dialogue extends and challenges students’ individual textual syntheses and broadens their appreciation of the essential question’s ambiguities. Seminar participation and post-seminar reflection allow students to refine their thinking before formal analytical writing.

Assignment components:

- Pre-seminar: formal written textual synthesis and annotated texts (used as a “ticket” for seminar participation)
- Participation: rubric assessing productive dialogue behavior, depth of ideas, and textual reference
- Post-seminar: written reflection on the seminar process and on the ideas generated in the dialogue; analytical essay addressing the essential question

Effective seminars depend on thoughtful preparation, from the selection of the unit’s multi-genre text set to the instruction of effective dialogue behaviors and facilitation. The ideal text set presents multiple and often-conflicting perspectives of the essential question and invites ample outside connections. Safe and productive dialogues result from careful teacher modeling and guided student practice of respectful and facilitative seminar interactions.

Among the most important skills for students to master, and one that requires extensive teacher modeling, is the development of challenging and thought-provoking seminar questions. These questions drive the seminar’s intellectual exchange, encouraging closer scrutiny of students’ assumptions and textual interpretations, expanding their perspectives of the overarching essential question, and preparing them for deeper analytical writing.

Best practices:

- Prepare a multi-genre text set that represents a range of perspectives on the essential question
- Model text annotation and provide feedback on students’ annotations
• Provide examples of productive seminar questions (those that invite multiple perspectives and outside connections) and guide students in crafting their own questions

• Instruct students in the differences among dialogue, discussion, and debate, emphasizing the seminar’s focus on dialogue

• Model and have students practice effective dialogue behaviors, including listening, follow-up and clarifying questioning, and eliciting participation from other group members. Begin the year by walking students through text annotations and seminars using short works like The Pledge of Allegiance or “The Story of an Hour” and provide students with individual feedback before using this approach with larger works and for larger grades.

• Use the seminar as a springboard for analytical writing on the essential question

While we have included several models or formats for Socratic seminars, there are many similar modes of analytic discussion that would effectively engage students in and provide mechanisms for measuring literary analysis skills. Marzano’s Highly Engaged Classroom is a great resource for ideas, but the guidelines of rigor, accountability, analysis and synthesis of ideas should be at the heart of whatever discussion format you select.
Seminar Guidelines

*Note: The following guidelines are useful to review and reinforce to students at the beginning of the year, as they help students understand the unique expectations of this mode of discussion, interaction, and social cognition.*

Socrates (June 4, ca. 470 BC – May 7, 399 BC) was a Greek (Athenian) philosopher.

- The Socratic method of teaching is based on Socrates' theory that it is more important to enable students to think for themselves than to merely fill their heads with "right" answers. Therefore, he regularly engaged his pupils in dialogues by responding to their questions with questions, instead of answers. This process encourages divergent thinking rather than convergent.

- Students are given opportunities to "examine" a common piece of text, whether it is in the form of a novel, poem, art print, or piece of music. After "reading" the common text "like a love letter," open-ended questions are posed. Open-ended questions allow students to think critically, analyze multiple meanings in text, and express ideas with clarity and confidence. After all, a certain degree of emotional safety is felt by participants when they understand that this format is based on dialogue and not discussion/debate.

- Dialogue is exploratory and involves the suspension of biases and prejudices. Discussion/debate is a transfer of information designed to win an argument and bring closure. Americans are great at discussion/debate. We do not dialogue well. However, once teachers and students learn to dialogue, they find that the ability to ask meaningful questions that stimulate thoughtful interchanges of ideas is more important than "the answer."

- Participants in a Socratic Seminar respond to one another with respect by carefully listening instead of interrupting. Students are encouraged to "paraphrase" essential elements of another's ideas before responding, either in support of or in disagreement. Members of the dialogue look each other in the "eyes" and use each other names. This simple act of socialization reinforces appropriate behaviors and promotes team building.
Guidelines for Socratic Seminars

1. Refer to the text when needed during the discussion. A seminar is not a test of memory. You are not "learning a subject;" your goal is to understand the ideas, issues, and values reflected in the text.

2. It's OK to "pass" when asked to contribute.

3. Do not participate if you are not prepared.

4. Do not stay confused; ask for clarification.

5. Stick to the point currently under discussion; make notes about ideas you want to come back to.

6. Don't raise hands; take turns speaking.

7. Listen carefully.

8. Speak up so that all can hear you.

9. Talk to each other, not just to the leader or teacher.

10. Discuss ideas rather than each other's opinions.

11. You are responsible for the seminar, even if you don't know it or admit it.
Expectations of Participants in a Socratic Seminar

When I am evaluating your Socratic Seminar participation, I ask the following questions about participants. Did they:

✓ Speak loudly and clearly?
✓ Cite reasons and evidence for their statements?
✓ Use the text to find support?
✓ Listen to others respectfully?
✓ Stick with the subject?
✓ Talk to each other, not just to the leader?
✓ Paraphrase accurately?
✓ Ask for help to clear up confusion?
✓ Support each other?
✓ Avoid hostile exchanges?
✓ Question others in a civil manner?
✓ Seem prepared?
Dialogue vs. Debate

- Dialogue is collaborative: multiple sides work toward shared understanding.
- In dialogue, one listens to understand, to make meaning, and to find common ground.
- Dialogue enlarges and possibly changes a participant's point of view.
- Dialogue creates an open-minded attitude: an openness to being wrong and an openness to change.
- In dialogue, one submits one's best thinking, expecting that other people's reflections will help improve it rather than threaten it.
- Dialogue calls for temporarily suspending one's beliefs.
- In dialogue, one searches for strengths in all positions.
- Dialogue respects all the other participants and seeks not to alienate or offend.
- Dialogue assumes that many people have pieces of answers and that cooperation can lead to a greater understanding.
- Dialogue remains open-ended.

- Debate is oppositional: two opposing sides try to prove each other wrong.
- In debate, one listens to find flaws, to spot differences, and to counter arguments.
- Debate defends assumptions as truth.
- Debate creates a close-minded attitude, a determination to be right.
- In debate, one submits one's best thinking and defends it against challenge to show that it is right.
- Debate calls for investing wholeheartedly in one's beliefs.
- In debate, one searches for weaknesses in the other position.
- Debate rebuts contrary positions and may belittle or deprecate other participants.
- Debate assumes a single right answer that somebody already has.
- Debate demands a conclusion.

Dialogue is characterized by

😊 suspending judgment.

😊 examining our own work without defensiveness.

😊 exposing our reasoning and looking for limits to it.

😊 communicating our underlying assumptions.

😊 exploring viewpoints more broadly and deeply.

😊 being open to disconfirming data.

😊 approaching someone who sees a problem differently not as an adversary, but as a colleague in common pursuit of better solution.

Source: For the full PPT version, click here: [link]
Socratic Seminar on Thoreau

Your grade for this seminar will be based on three elements:

- Your annotations of the texts (20 points)
- Your contributions to the seminar discussion (50 points, see rubric)
- Your feedback as part of the Outer Circle (20 points, see form on the back)

Part I: Annotations  (20 points)

Question: Citing Walden (page 382-391) and Civil Disobedience, is Thoreau advocating reform or revolution?

Annotate each text (without writing in the book) about the conclusion the author wants you to reach, his premises, and the types of appeals he used to support his argument.

Conclusion/thesis:

Major premises:
Appeals used, examples (just first three words), and page numbers (identify at least 10 examples)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rhetorical strategies used</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Page #</th>
</tr>
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</table>
Part II: Participation in/Contributions to Seminar Discussion (50 points)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speak loudly and clearly</th>
<th>Cite reasons and evidence for their statements/Use the text to find support</th>
<th>Listen to others respectfully</th>
<th>Stick with the subject</th>
<th>Paraphrase accurately</th>
<th>Ask for help to clear up confusion</th>
<th>Interact in a civil manner</th>
<th>Pose thoughtful questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Your score:

Part III: Outer Circle Feedback (20 points)

Take notes on specific people who either follow or do not follow the guidelines below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speak loudly and clearly</th>
<th>Cite reasons and evidence for their statements/Use the text to find support</th>
<th>Listen to others respectfully</th>
<th>Stick with the subject</th>
<th>Paraphrase accurately</th>
<th>Ask for help to clear up confusion</th>
<th>Interact in a civil manner</th>
<th>Pose thoughtful questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Note: If you feel your participation in the seminar discussion did not reflect the depth of your understanding of the texts, and/or your ability to interpret and analyze them, see the teacher for an alternate assignment.
Socratic Seminar: Race in America

Your grade for this seminar will be based on three elements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Potential Points</th>
<th>Your Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your seminar notes</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your contributions to the seminar discussion</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outer Circle feedback and insights</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Part I: Seminar Notes** (20 points)

**Essential Questions:**

- What is racism? Discrimination? Prejudice? What are their effects on the people involved?
- What were the early foundations of racism against African-Americans?
- How has racism influenced our political, social, judicial, and educational institutions?
- To what extent has the United States a cultural “melting pot” in which all immigrants both assimilate and make their own contributions to the larger culture?
- To what extent have we achieved racial equality in America?
- What does prejudice and discrimination “feel” like in its more subtle forms today, and opposed to the more explicit forms in the past?
- What contributions have people from minority groups made to American culture?
- To what extent and in what ways have government policies, laws, and programs helped move us towards racial equality? To what extent and in what ways have they failed to achieve this?
- What can and should we do to promote greater equality between all people in our country?

**Task**

Develop **your own coherent responses to these questions**. For each of the three sets of questions, respond in 2-3 complete sentences of your own, and then identify supporting examples from the works we have read. Support your ideas with at least 7 total examples from any of the texts below*, including at least 2 examples for each set of questions and at least two from A Raisin in the Sun.
Text Set

A Raisin in the Sun

Paragraph two of the Declaration of Independence

President Obama’s Inaugural Address

“We Wear the Mask” Paul Lawrence Dunbar

“Heritage” “Any Human to Another” Countee Cullen

Selections from Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass

“If We Must Die”

“Harlem” Langston Hughes

“Life for My Child is Simple”

“Primer for Blacks”

“Still I Rise” Maya Angelo

“The Sky is Gray”

“I, Too, Sing America”

“How It Feels To Be Colored Me”

*Note: You may also use up to 2 supporting examples from 1 additional source of your own (as part of the 7), but you must bring that source with you to class.
Seminar Notes:

Set I:

- What is racism? Discrimination? Prejudice? What are their effects on the people involved?
- What were the early foundations of racism against African-Americans?
- How has racism influenced our political, social, judicial, and educational institutions?

2-3 sentence summary of your ideas:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quote (first three words… last three words, but have the full quotes handy for the seminar)</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>1.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Set II:

- To what extent has the United States a cultural “melting pot” in which all immigrants both assimilate and make their own contributions to the larger culture?
- To what extent have we achieved racial equality in America?
- What does prejudice and discrimination “feel” like in its more subtle forms today, and opposed to the more explicit forms in the past?

2-3 sentence summary of your ideas

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<td>3.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Set III:

- To what extent and in what ways have government policies, laws, and programs helped move us towards racial equality? To what extent and in what ways have they failed to achieve this?
- What can and should we do to promote greater equality between all people in our country?

2-3 sentence summary of your ideas:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quote (first three words… last three words, but have the full quotes handy for the seminar)</th>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
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<td>3.</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Part II: Participation in/Contributions to Seminar Discussion (60 points)

60 points (Outstanding Contributions/Leadership)

- Participant offers unique, insightful analysis, without prompting, to move the conversation forward
- Provides productive leadership: helps to steer the discussion towards the central questions, makes consistent contributions without interfering others’ opportunities to contribute
- Participant, through her comments, demonstrates a deep knowledge of the text and the question
- Participant has come to the seminar prepared, with notes and a marked/annotated text
- Participant, through her comments, shows that she is actively listening to other participants
- Participant offers clarification and/or follow-up that extends the conversation
- Participant’s remarks often refer back to specific parts of the texts

50 points (Proficient)

- Participant offers solid analysis without prompting
- Through comments, participant demonstrates a good knowledge of the text and the question
- Participant has come to the seminar prepared, with notes and marked/annotated text
- Participant shows that he/she is actively listening to other and offers clarification and/or follow-up

40 points (Competent)

- Participant offers some analysis, but needs prompting from the seminar leader
- Through comments, participant demonstrates a general knowledge of the text and question
- Participant is less prepared, with few notes and no marked/annotated text
- Participant is actively listening to others, but does not offer clarification and/or follow-up to others’ comments
- Participant relies more upon his or her opinion, and less on the text to drive her comments

30 points (Emerging Skills)

- Participant offers little commentary
- Participant comes to the seminar ill-prepared with little understanding of the text and question
- Participant does not listen to others, offers no commentary to further the discussion
- Participant distracts the group by interrupting other speakers or by offering off topic questions and comments.
- Participant ignores the discussion and its participants

0 points

- Participant makes no contributions to the dialogue
Part III: Outer Circle Feedback and Insights  (20 points)

Describe one specific comment a peer made that deepened your understanding of these ideas (and the student’s name). **10 points**

Take notes on specific people who either follow or do not follow the guidelines below:  **10 points**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Make insightful contributions</th>
<th>Cite reasons and evidence for their statements/Use the text to find support</th>
<th>Speak loudly and clearly</th>
<th>Paraphrase accurately</th>
<th>Ask for help to clear up confusion</th>
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</table>

**Note:** If you feel your participation in the seminar discussion did not reflect the depth of your understanding of the texts, and/or your ability to interpret and analyze them, you may complete the alternate assignment. If you are absent for the seminar, you must write a typed essay of at least 500 words responding to the core question replacing Parts II and III. This essay should address all three sets of questions, include all seven supporting examples, and a Works Cited page.
Socratic Seminar Reflection

Name ________________________________

Seminar # ______________________________

Text Title(s): ________________________________

Author(s): ________________________________

Opening Question(s):

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

1. Summary of key ideas:

2. Reaction: Identify what someone said; write down his/her comment. React to his/her statement.

3. Explain how the Seminar influenced your thinking about the topic or the text(s).
4. **Socratic Connections:** Identify and explain a connection to . . .

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>another writer/poet</th>
<th>news article</th>
<th>movie</th>
<th>Song</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>commercial</td>
<td>Photograph/painting</td>
<td>TV show</td>
<td>person you know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>experience you had</td>
<td>observation</td>
<td>another culture</td>
<td>famous/infamous person</td>
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<tr>
<td>your choices . . .</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Explain your connection fully:

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5. **Self-Assessment and Reflection:**

Comment on your preparedness for today’s seminar (notes, reflections, annotations, etc.):

Comment on your participation in today’s seminar (posing questions, taking a stance, encouraging peers, using text, etc.)
Identify a personal goal for the next seminar:

Identify a group goal and how you would be willing to contribute to it:

------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------Teacher Comment
The Great Gatsby Seminar Preparation

I. Gatsby Analysis:

Explain how Fitzgerald uses at least two of these to develop a theme about the American Dream (cite examples – chapters and pages from the text):

Motif, characterization, juxtaposition, paradox, irony, allusion, metaphor, simile, personification, hyperbole, imagery, other sensory language, diction that creates mood

1.

2.

Write one question you still have about Gatsby:
II. Essential Question

Refer to at least three of the texts below, including *Gatsby*, along with any relevant reading quiz responses, to answer (or theorize about) the following questions. *Include text citations.*

*The Great Gatsby*, “Class in America” (*NY Times*) “Far From Gulf…” (*NY Times*); “Up From the Holler…” (*NY Times*); “With the American Dream Comes the American Nightmare” (*NPR*); song lyrics and quotes about the American Dream

1. **Essential Question**: What is the American Dream?

**Related Questions** (answer at least two):

2. What motivates one to pursue the Dream?

3. How does one achieve the Dream?

4. What is it like to live the Dream?

5. What is the social impact of achieving the Dream?/What is the impact of social mobility on different social classes?
Your questions & connections:

1. Make one outside connection to *Gatsby* that has not yet arisen in class:

2. Pose one new question about the American Dream that could be addressed by any of the texts we have read:

3. Circle one of the above responses that you will definitely contribute to the dialogue next class
Socratic Seminar Preparation

Upon completion of the assigned reading, please write a question in each of the following categories. Your questions will be used for the discussion so it is imperative that you come prepared. The idea is to participate by both speaking and listening to arrive at deeper critical thought through this dialogue (not debate).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Connection Question:</th>
<th>Write a question using the text that connects to the real world either from your own perspective, a connection with another text, or a larger world connection. (After reading the first part of Huck Finn, I might ask about your adventures in childhood.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Close Ended Question:</td>
<td>Write a question about the text that will help everyone in the class come to an agreement about events or characters in the text. This question usually has a ‘correct’ answer. (After reading Huck Finn, I might ask why Huck decided to run away.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your Close Ended Question:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Ended Question:</td>
<td>Write an insightful question about the text that will require proof and group discussion and construction of logic to discover or explore the answer to the question. (After reading Huck Finn, I might ask why Mrs. Watson could not see that having a slave, even when she treated him benevolently, was wrong.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your Text Connection Question:</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Your Open Ended Question:**

**Universal Theme/Core Question:** Write a question dealing with a theme of the text that will encourage group discussion about the universality of the text. (After reading *Huck Finn*, I might ask about how the characters embodied the theme of alienation and isolation.)

**Your Universal Theme/Core Question:**

**Literary Analysis Question:** Write a question dealing with how an author chose to compose a literary piece. How did the author manipulate point of view, characterization, poetic form, archetypal patterns, etc.? (After reading *Huck Finn*, I might ask how dialect played a crucial role in character development.)

**Your Literary Analysis Question:**
Socratic Seminar #3: Vision & Perception

Symbolism & The Cover Design of *The Great Gatsby*

**Your Circle:** Circle #1  Circle #2

**Directions:** Our third Socratic Seminar will take place on Friday, January 4\(^{th}\) (A) & Monday, January 7\(^{th}\) (B). Your circle assignment is indicated above; if you are in Circle #1, you will be in the inner circle first. Prior to the Seminar, carefully analyze the cover design of *The Great Gatsby*; then, go through your annotations and prepare by pulling relevant quotes and examples. Of course, you are strongly encouraged to brainstorm outside examples as well; you might consider drawing from other literature, movies, TV shows, history, current events, psychology, sociology, science, or other related fields. In addition, brainstorm at least one supplementary question that you can pose during the discussion.

**Initiating Topic:**

The symbolic cover design of *The Great Gatsby*

**Supplementary Question:**

*Use the space below and on the back of this sheet to outline ideas, questions, and textual evidence; you may use this sheet in the Seminar, and it will constitute the “preparation” component of your Socratic Seminar grade. There is also a digital copy of the cover design uploaded to VISION; if you like, you may print it off and mark up the image to prepare for discussion as well.*
Question Ideas

1. Of countless American protagonists, the hopeful and honest, the ambitious and scheming, the editors of a 2002 issue of Book magazine decided that it is “the elusive Gatsby, the cynical idealist, who embodies America in all of its messy glory” (from a 2002 New York Times editorial). How is or isn’t Gatsby emblematic of our country’s Dreamers?

2. Events in a tragedy proceed in a relentless cause-and-effect sequence to an inevitable end. We admire the hero who blindly but heroically seals his own fate. Is Gatsby a tragic hero? What is admirable, sympathetic, or pathetic about his story?

3. Are there other Gatsby-like figures (fictional or real) in our culture? Are they heroic or sympathetic?

4. Raymond Chandler said this of F. Scott Fitzgerald’s writing: “[It] had one of the rarest qualities in all literature….charm. It's not a matter of pretty writing or clear style. It's a kind of subdued magic, controlled and exquisite, the sort of thing you get from good string quartettes.” Which passages in Gatsby seem to have “a subdued magic”? How does the writing (the diction, imagery, sentence length, etc.) accomplish this?

5. Consider this quote from chapter 9 and accompanying question:

“[New York’s] vanished last trees, the trees that had made way for Gatsby's house, had once pandered in whispers to last and greatest of all human dreams; for a transitory enchanted moment man must have held his breath in the presence of this continent, compelled into an aesthetic contemplation he neither understood nor desired, face to face for the last time in history with something commensurate to his capacity for wonder.”

Q: In Nick’s reverie, what feeds the wonder and dreams of early Americans? What can we generalize from this about at least one inspiration for awe and ambition?

7. Consider the significance of the color green—why should the light symbolizing Gatsby’s future have this color? Comment on the color’s connotations. (Question adapted from University of West Georgia faculty webpage – Jason Kensler: http://www.westga.edu/~jkesler/ENGL1102-11week_9.htm)

8. What is the theme of Gatsby? Which passages best develop it? Is there truth in it?

9. Are our dreams “boats [beating] against the current, borne back ceaselessly in past”? Is there truth in this paradox? Do we forge our goals in ideals from the past?
10. Consider this quote and question:

"So we inherited two worlds—the one of hope to which we had been bred; and the one of disillusion which we had discovered early for ourselves." –F. Scott Fitzgerald, on his post-World War I generation of Americans

Q: How do hope and disillusionment compete in the pursuit of one’s dreams?

11. What does Gatsby suggest about identity? Is it “constructed” by oneself and by everyone else’s view of him or her? Or is there always a “true, authentic identity” hidden somewhere? How does one access that identity? (Question from University of West Georgia English faculty web page - http://www.westga.edu/~perben/Engl%202130/Fitzgerald,%20Great%20Gatsby.doc.)

-- To what extent does an individual’s past shape his or her identity?

-- Is the notion that one can create his own identity uniquely American?

12. Can everyone achieve the Dream?

-- What matters more, the individual’s Dream, or the community’s Dream?
1. Craft an analytical thesis statement about the seminar text:

   In ________________ (text), _________________________ (author) uses
   ______________________ (technique) to suggest _____________________ (argument).

2. Craft a persuasive thesis about the text (1-sentence statement of opinion, without “I think”):
# Socratic Seminar Check Sheet

Your Name (outer circle): ____________________  Period: ______

Who are you observing (inner circle)? ____________________  Date: ______

Topic: _____________________________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviors Seen</th>
<th>Number Of Times</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Contributes a new idea</td>
<td></td>
<td>A. What went well in the discussion process? How did people work together to let the discussion flow?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Adds a thought or more explanation to another person’s comment</td>
<td></td>
<td>B. How could the discussion have improved? What would have helped things flow more smoothly?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Asks for clarification</td>
<td></td>
<td>C. What interesting comments did people make? What ideas do you take from today’s discussion?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Refers to a specific spot in the text being discussed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Connects to another text (movie, artwork, song, TV show, novel, short story, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Makes a connection to the world</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Uses a precise example to further explain own ideas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Paraphrases another person’s comment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Invites someone into the discussion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Compliments or encourages others</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Reflective Writing/Journal Entries

Students should be writing every day; much of that writing is in the form of journal entries at the start of class. These journal entries serve multiple purposes; they give students the opportunity for first-draft thinking about essential questions, topic generation for creative writing assignments, and synthesis of the myriad texts studied in each unit. The journal entries that function as pre-writing should not be formally graded. However, teachers may ask students to select certain journals to revise and submit for a grade. Also, all journal entries should be kept for possible inclusion in student portfolios. Some online sources with suggestions follow:

*Teaching Adolescent Writers* by Kelly Gallagher

“Inside the Writing Process” and “Teach Writing as a Process” by Donald Murray

“Madman, Architect, Carpenter, Judge” by Betty Flowers

*Writing Down the Bones* by Natalie Goldberg

Assignments

- Student Reflective Products include journals and diaries that are archived as ongoing examinations of individual “Big Questions” and questions explored as part of textual study
- Student reflections on prompts provided as warm ups or exit tickets
- Reading of journals and diaries—Frederick Douglass, Ben Franklin
- Periodic sharing with the class or other students
- Rhetorical/Literary technique /persuasive appeals practice and experimentation
- Reflective companion piece to student’s original work

We should provide frequent opportunities for students to reflect on ongoing activities. The process should build analytical thinking skills, writing stamina, consciousness of rhetorical expression, and also an outlet for every student to have a say in ongoing discourse.
Best Practices

- Model and guide students’ writing using teacher produced samples done in class, written at the same time students write
- Provide opportunities for experimentation with techniques
- Check journals frequently; provide feedback
Race in America Journal Entry 1

Write 200 words responding to any of the following questions:

- What is racism? Discrimination? Prejudice? What are their effects on the people involved?
- What were the early foundations of racism against African-Americans?
- How has racism influenced our political, social, judicial, and educational institutions?
- To what extent have we achieved racial equality in America?
- What does prejudice and discrimination “feel” like in its more subtle forms today, and opposed to the more explicit forms in the past?
- To what extent and in what ways have government policies, laws, and programs helped move us towards racial equality? To what extent and in what ways have they failed to achieve this?
- To what extent has the United States a cultural “melting pot” in which all immigrants both assimilate and make their own contributions to the larger culture?

Race in America Journal Entry 3

Read and annotate the following excerpts from The Declaration of Independence, Dr. King’s “I Have a Dream” Speech, and President Obama’s first Inaugural Address. Then write a journal entry of at least 200 words addressing these essential questions for this unit and includes at least 3 direct quotes from these texts:

- How has racism influenced our political, social, judicial, and educational institutions?
- To what extent has the United States been a cultural “melting pot” in which all immigrants both assimilate and make their own contributions to the larger culture?
- To what extent have we achieved racial equality in America?
- To what extent and in what ways have government policies, laws, and programs helped move us towards racial equality? To what extent and in what ways have they failed to achieve this?

….We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any form of government becomes destructive to these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness.

From The Declaration of Independence
Selections from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s “I Have a Dream” Speech

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.…

With this faith, we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith, we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith, we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.…

And if America is to be a great nation, this must become true.

Selections from President Obama’s First Inaugural Address, January 2009

My fellow citizens: I stand here today humbled by the task before us, grateful for the trust you've bestowed, mindful of the sacrifices borne by our ancestors.

I thank President Bush for his service to our nation as well as the generosity and cooperation he has shown throughout this transition.

Forty-four Americans have now taken the presidential oath. The words have been spoken during rising tides of prosperity and the still waters of peace. Yet, every so often, the oath is taken amidst gathering clouds and raging storms. At these moments, America has carried on not simply because of the skill or vision of those in high office, but because we, the people, have remained faithful to the ideals of our forebears and true to our founding documents. So it has been; so it must be with this generation of Americans.…

On this day, we gather because we have chosen hope over fear, unity of purpose over conflict and discord. On this day, we come to proclaim an end to the petty grievances and false promises, the recriminations and worn-out dogmas that for far too long have strangled our politics. We remain a young nation. But in the words of Scripture, the time has come to set aside childish things. The time has come to reaffirm our enduring spirit; to choose our better history; to carry forward that precious gift, that noble idea passed on from generation to generation: the God-given promise that all are equal, all are free, and all deserve a chance to pursue their full measure of happiness.
In reaffirming the greatness of our nation we understand that greatness is never a given. It must be earned. Our journey has never been one of short-cuts or settling for less. It has not been the path for the faint-hearted, for those that prefer leisure over work, or seek only the pleasures of riches and fame. Rather, it has been the risk-takers, the doers, the makers of things -- some celebrated, but more often men and women obscure in their labor -- who have carried us up the long rugged path towards prosperity and freedom.

For us, they packed up their few worldly possessions and traveled across oceans in search of a new life. For us, they toiled in sweatshops, and settled the West, endured the lash of the whip, and plowed the hard earth. For us, they fought and died in places like Concord and Gettysburg, Normandy and Khe Sahn.

Time and again these men and women struggled and sacrificed and worked till their hands were raw so that we might live a better life. They saw America as bigger than the sum of our individual ambitions, greater than all the differences of birth or wealth or faction. This is the journey we continue today. We remain the most prosperous, powerful nation on Earth. Our workers are no less productive than when this crisis began. Our minds are no less inventive, our goods and services no less needed than they were last week, or last month, or last year. Our capacity remains undiminished. But our time of standing pat, of protecting narrow interests and putting off unpleasant decisions -- that time has surely passed. Starting today, we must pick ourselves up, dust ourselves off, and begin again the work of remaking America….

For we know that our patchwork heritage is a strength, not a weakness. We are a nation of Christians and Muslims, Jews and Hindus, and non-believers. We are shaped by every language and culture, drawn from every end of this Earth; and because we have tasted the bitter swill of civil war and segregation, and emerged from that dark chapter stronger and more united, we cannot help but believe that the old hatreds shall someday pass; that the lines of tribe shall soon dissolve; that as the world grows smaller, our common humanity shall reveal itself; and that America must play its role in ushering in a new era of peace….

Our challenges may be new. The instruments with which we meet them may be new. But those values upon which our success depends -- honesty and hard work, courage and fair play, tolerance and curiosity, loyalty and patriotism -- these things are old. These things are true. They have been the quiet force of progress throughout our history.

What is demanded, then, is a return to these truths. What is required of us now is a new era of responsibility -- a recognition on the part of every American that we have duties to ourselves, our
nation and the world; duties that we do not grudgingly accept, but rather seize gladly, firm in the knowledge that there is nothing so satisfying to the spirit, so defining of our character than giving our all to a difficult task.

This is the price and the promise of citizenship. This is the source of our confidence -- the knowledge that God calls on us to shape an uncertain destiny. This is the meaning of our liberty and our creed, why men and women and children of every race and every faith can join in celebration across this magnificent mall; and why a man whose father less than 60 years ago might not have been served in a local restaurant can now stand before you to take a most sacred oath.

So let us mark this day with remembrance of who we are and how far we have traveled. In the year of America's birth, in the coldest of months, a small band of patriots huddled by dying campfires on the shores of an icy river. The capital was abandoned. The enemy was advancing. The snow was stained with blood. At the moment when the outcome of our revolution was most in doubt, the father of our nation ordered these words to be read to the people:

"Let it be told to the future world...that in the depth of winter, when nothing but hope and virtue could survive... that the city and the country, alarmed at one common danger, came forth to meet [it]."

America: In the face of our common dangers, in this winter of our hardship, let us remember these timeless words. With hope and virtue, let us brave once more the icy currents, and endure what storms may come. Let it be said by our children's children that when we were tested we refused to let this journey end, that we did not turn back nor did we falter; and with eyes fixed on the horizon and God's grace upon us, we carried forth that great gift of freedom and delivered it safely to future generations.

Thank you. God bless you. And God bless the United States of America.
Society and the Individual Activity

Read through the following pie charts about revenues and expenses at the federal, state and county level. Write for ten minutes about any questions, connections, or ideas you have about this information or the policies related to them and how they relate to our central questions:

- What does the individual owe society? What does society owe the individual?
- What should be the role of government in a democracy where we are “self-governing” and where we believe “the best government is that which governs least”?
- What government functions represent areas where we all contribute to the common good, things that benefit us all that would not exist if it were not for these coordinated efforts (e.g. roads and bridges)? Which functions represent support structures for those who are less fortunate than others?

Creative Writing and the Writing Process

In each unit, as students examine different sets of stylistic elements, they should have an opportunity to practice using these elements in their own writing. For example, after studying how accomplished writers use diction choices and imagery to convey a mood, they should write their own scenes using diction choices and imagery to convey a mood. After studying the use of rhetorical devices, they should develop their own persuasive messages (in a variety of modes and/or media) incorporating these devices and explaining how they used them. Intentionally using these devices and approaches, and reflecting on their use, gives students a deeper appreciation and understanding of these tools. Some online sources with suggestions follow:

*Teaching Adolescent Writers* by Kelly Gallagher

“Inside the Writing Process” and “Teach Writing as a Process” by Donald Murray

“Madman, Architect, Carpenter, Judge” by Betty Flowers

*Writing Down the Bones* by Natalie Goldberg

As often as possible, students should be given authentic opportunities for publication, for audiences beyond the teacher that are meaningful to students.

Assignments

- Student Creative Products Across the Spectrum
  - Narrative fiction
  - Plays (or scenes, skits)
  - Poetry (free verse, blank verse, sonnets, haiku)
  - Creative Non-fiction (drawing on reflective writing, journals, diaries)
- Careful reading of multi-genre texts and analysis of distinguishing features
- Rhetorical/Literary technique /persuasive appeals (verisimilitude, for example)
- Group analysis and feedback on text produced
- Idea Generation Activities
We should provide frequent opportunities for students to analyze how authors creatively use literary and language techniques in both written and visual texts to convey an argument or theme. Familiarity with rhetoric and figurative language should be reinforced.

Teachers should offer models of writing. They should closely guide students’ writing through a thorough drafting and revision process, including teacher, peer, and self-evaluation.

**Best Practices**

- Prepare overview of the writing process used by many authors—Pre-Writing, Research, Drafting, Feedback, Conferencing, Publication
- Model and guide students’ writing using samples studied and, if appropriated, teacher generated text
- Provide opportunities for experimentation with techniques
- Check for understanding of literary and language device terminology
- Incorporated contemporary forums of expression (Facebook, Tweets)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Creative Synthesis*</th>
<th>Create a twitter or facebook propaganda feed for your assigned character (Danforth, Hale, or Proctor). Include:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Profile name or handle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• A statement of what the character wants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 2 quotes from <em>The Crucible</em> representing the character's rhetorical style (logos/ethos/pathos; inductive/deductive)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Comment by another character on your character's integrity/trustworthiness, based on his actions throughout the play.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some sample creative assignments are on the following page.
Creative Writing Project

- For this project, you will create a scene or short story that contains symbols and juxtaposition to create a message or emphasize a point for your reader. For example, in the turtle scene, Steinbeck created the turtle as a symbol for the Joads: like the turtle, they were determined to reach their destination; like the turtle, they were burdened by a cumbersome method of movement; like the turtle, they encountered interference along the way—some trying to help and some trying to hinder their progress. But in the end, the turtle helped to plant a seed that would one day bloom into a plant. Likewise, Steinbeck suggests that something positive may come from the Joads’ journey.

- For this project, think about a message you want to convey to the reader. Then consider how to use symbolism, imagery, and juxtaposition to communicate that message. For example, you might compare a student going through the daily routine of high school to a colony of ants.

- **Reflective Writing**
  At the end of your scene or story, include one or two paragraphs in which you explain what message you hoped to convey to the reader and how you used a combination of symbolism, imagery, and juxtaposition to communicate that message.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Above Expectations (20)</th>
<th>Meets Expectations (15)</th>
<th>Below Expectations (&lt;15)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication of message</td>
<td>The author presents a clear message resulting from a balance of literary techniques. Message is developed consistently throughout.</td>
<td>The author presents a message, though at times it is unclear or off-topic or is not developed consistently throughout.</td>
<td>The author attempts to present a message, though it is unclear, inappropriate to theme, or inconsistent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of symbolism</td>
<td>Symbolism is used effectively—neither too obvious or too subtle—to convey messages and meanings greater than the physical symbol itself.</td>
<td>Symbolism is used, though it could be used more effectively in communicating the message.</td>
<td>Symbolism may be used, but it is inappropriate to the theme or does not contribute to the message.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of imagery</td>
<td>A combination of imagery using all five senses effectively contributes to the piece’s central message.</td>
<td>A limited use of imagery contributes to the piece’s central message.</td>
<td>Imagery may be used, but it does not contribute effectively to the central message.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness of juxtaposition</td>
<td>Images and symbols are balanced with diction, tone, and other elements to clearly convey the author’s message.</td>
<td>Images and symbols convey the author’s message, though they could be better balanced.</td>
<td>Imagery and symbolism is used, but it is not juxtaposed in such a way as to add meaning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar &amp; Mechanics</td>
<td>Grammar and mechanics is perfect or nearly perfect, allowing the message to stand out.</td>
<td>Few mistakes that do not detract from a reader’s understanding of the message.</td>
<td>Errors detract from a clear reading of the piece.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective Writing (graded separately)</td>
<td>Organizational structure of piece, central message, juxtaposition, and intended emotional response clearly explained with specific references to the text.</td>
<td>Organizational structure of piece, central message, juxtaposition, and intended emotional response clearly explained.</td>
<td>Required elements are missing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Peer Editing for Creative Project

Your Name______________________________________________________

Name of Peer Reviewer #1: ______________________________________

When reading or viewing the piece, what emotions did you feel?

If watching a video, did you understand the details about the disaster (who, what, when, where, why)? What could be added to clarify? If reading a creative piece, was the author’s message clear? What could be clarified?

List two examples of effective juxtaposition:

Were there any uses of juxtaposition that seemed inappropriate or ineffective?

What was your favorite part of this piece?
What was your least favorite part of this piece?

Were images and quotes / imagery and symbolism used enough? Should more be added? Explain.

Note any typos or grammatical errors:
The Scarlet Letter Adaptation Project

An adaptation is when an author/screenwriter/playwright copies the central plot, conflicts, characters, and themes of a classic work and modifies it slightly to create a new work. Usually this means changing the setting and the character’s names and cultural identities, although it could also mean converting a work from one medium to another (a novel to a play, a film to a novel, etc.). Great works like Shakespeare’s plays that have universal themes have been adapted to thousands of other works, in languages all over the world.

For this assignment, you will work as a team of screenwriters being asked by Steven Spielberg to create a screenplay for a modern film adaptation of The Scarlet Letter. You will take the core elements of the plot and the major characters and reset them in a modern setting. You can convert it into a story about a love triangle in an Amish community, in a political leader’s family, in a religious leader’s family, or any other cultural/historical context. Keep in mind that our perspectives, values, and mores about extramarital affairs, children born out of wedlock, and shame and sin have changed over time as you select the setting.

Directions
In groups of 2-4, you will do the following:

- Select a new setting for your story, outline the storyline and assign scenes to write.
- Assign new names and identities to the main characters (see form below)
- **Each group member will write two scenes** (groups of 2 do 4 scenes, groups of 3 do 6 scenes, groups of 4 do 8 scenes, etc.)
- Your script should parallel the storyline of The Scarlet Letter, with action coming from at least 4 of the 24 chapters. You do not need to include all elements of the plot of each chapter, but if you mirror a scene from the play your scene should be long enough to capture the key events and dialogue of the original scene.
- You may include additional scenes for extra credit, worth up to 15 points each.
- Each scene should be at least 300 words and you should list the word count at the bottom of the page.
- Each scene should be written so that the characterization, plot, symbolism and motifs clearly contribute to the larger theme.
- You may write this in prose (like the original) or convert it to drama form as a script/screenplay.
- If written in dramatic form, on the first page of each scene, in stage directions, explain where and when the story takes place. Describe what each of the characters look like and are wearing. Use the conventions of drama in writing your script. Write out what each character is saying, but include descriptions of movements and tone of voice.
- You will bring in rough (but complete) drafts of your scenes for peer review within your group on _______.
- Final drafts are due on ________________.
- Once you have completed your final draft, you will write a Reflection Essay explaining 1) how your characterization, plot elements, symbolism, and motifs contribute to the theme, and 2) the effect your modified setting had on both characterization and plot. Make sure to include specific examples from your story to support and illustrate your claims.
Notes on Grading:

- all script scenes and performances will be graded individually so make sure you note the author’s name on each scene
- You may have groups of 5-6, but they must do at least 12 scenes of 300 words of more.

Portfolio folder

- On the cover create a film poster advertising a movie version of your story
- On the back of the cover include a picture and at least 5 quotes from critics ( “This is the best adaptation of Macbeth I have ever read… truly tragic!” – The New York Times)
- Inside, include a Title page (see example below), your story (typed, double-spaced, in 12 point font, with each author’s name at the top right of each page) and a completed rubric at the end for each person.

Character Translations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Scarlet Letter characters’ names/identities</th>
<th>Your characters’ names/identities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hester Prynne</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Roger Chillingsworth</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Rev. Dimmesdale</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pearl</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The Scarlet Letter Adaptation Phase I Worksheet

Title: __________________________________________________________________________

Group Members: ____________________________________________________________________

New Setting: _______________________________________________________________________

Time: ___________________ Place: _______________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ten Key scenes</th>
<th>Chapter in the Book</th>
<th>Who will write them</th>
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<tbody>
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</table>
# Rubric for Adaptation Project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Rubric for Adaptation Project</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-Evaluation</strong></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Self-Evaluation</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strength of characterization</td>
<td></td>
<td>/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree to which the characterization clearly contributes to the theme</td>
<td></td>
<td>/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree to which the elements of the plot clearly contribute to the theme</td>
<td></td>
<td>/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree to which the symbolism clearly contributes to the theme</td>
<td></td>
<td>/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree to which the motif clearly contributes to the theme</td>
<td></td>
<td>/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ways in which the characterization contributes to the theme are explained and illustrated in the Reflection Essay</td>
<td></td>
<td>/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ways in which the plot contributes to the theme are explained and illustrated in the Reflection Essay</td>
<td></td>
<td>/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ways in which the symbols contributes to the theme are explained and illustrated in the Reflection Essay</td>
<td></td>
<td>/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ways in which the motif contributes to the theme are explained and illustrated in the Reflection Essay</td>
<td></td>
<td>/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of writing</td>
<td></td>
<td>/30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formatting (font, spacing, name, margins, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td>/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Grade for Cover, Reviews and Title Page</td>
<td></td>
<td>/20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL** | | /150 |
Not So Truly Titan, A High School Tragedy:
A Modern Adaptation of
Shakespeare’s *The Tragedy of Macbeth*

By

Sam Waterson and Edgar James

March 1, 2007

**Example of Reviews:**

“This is the best adaptation of Macbeth I have ever seen… truly tragic!”
*The New York Times*

“Worth coming into town to see in a theater…”
*Field and Stream*

“Disturbing…the authors need to talk to their guidance counselors immediately…”
*School Counselors Monthly*

“So vivid, so engaging, and yet so twisted. A true masterpiece of modern cinema…”
*Mad Magazine*

“I found myself asking: how did they know all these details of my life?”
O.J. Simpson
Notes on Stage Directions

Stage directions are a way for the playwright or screenwriter to give information to the people putting on the play about how the scene should be created. These directions are not simply notes for the actors, but for the director and technical crew (lighting, costumes, makeup, scenery, etc.)

In a script we use stage directions for:

- Describing the setting
- Describing the people and what they are wearing
- Describing the tone of voice actors should be using
- Describing any non-verbal cues for the actors (coughing, gestures, mannerisms)
- Describing any movement on the stage (walking, fighting, looking at things or people, etc.)

Example:

Scene 1:

The scene: A high school cafeteria in a large suburban high school. Students are eating and talking and two students, Mac and Maisie, sit down at the table in the middle of the room. Mac is a tall, handsome, athletic senior with a football jacket on. Maisie is a cheerleader with blonde hair and a stuck-up air about her.

Mac: [begins eating his hamburger and asks casually while he chews] So, did you get my text about that crazy email I got, about being the captain of the team?

Maisie: [looking around, then leans towards him, quietly, secretly, obviously excited and intense] Oh, my, god. I would kill for you to be able to be captain!

The Figure of Emotion

Assignment:

For this exercise you will be focused on bringing an emotion or feeling to life. Begin by choosing an emotion or feeling that you are familiar with (jealousy, joy, loneliness, fear, love, grief, hope, desire, etc…) - remember we write our best when we write about what we know.
Brainstorm:

Write down all the words that come to your mind when you think about the feeling you’ve chosen. Don’t worry about if they make sense or not, don’t filter, just let your brain churn things out.

Emotion/feeling:

Personification: If this emotion were a being…

What would it look like?

How would it move?

What sounds would it make?

How would it smell?

When would it approach you?

Where would it live?

What does it say? What is its voice like?
Simile:
What characteristics can be compared to other things (think literally and figuratively)?

Metaphor: If this emotion were an object…
What would it be?
What would it do?
How would you treat it or respond to it?

*Use your notes to construct a poem about this emotion. Try seeing it in relation to you- is it something you pursue? Does it stalk you? Is it something you battle?* (150-200 words)
Race in America: Creative Writing Assignment

Create a scene in which you develop a distinctive voice that contributes in some way to the purpose of your piece. This should be at least 250 words. Write a reflection of 2-3 sentences in which you describe how you developed that voice, what the purpose of the piece was, and how it contributed to the purpose.

Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Potential Points</th>
<th>Your score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development of distinctive voice that contributes to the purpose of the piece</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of writing</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length (250 words)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Thoroughness/insight of reflection</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>80</strong></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LCPS Honors Core Unit:
English 11 Honors
The American Dream

Developed by Chris Cuozzo and Tom Clawson
Woodgrove High School
## Overview

### Essential Questions

- What is the American Dream?
- Where did it come from? How has the Dream itself changed over time? How have people’s abilities or opportunities to achieve these dreams changed over time?
- What elements of our culture enable people to achieve the American Dream? What elements of our culture acts as obstacles to the achievement of these dreams?
- What positive effects has it had on our culture? What negative effects has it had on our culture?
- To what extent is the American Dream only about money and materialism? Is the self-interested pursuit of a materialist American Dream inherently in conflict with basic moral values?
- What was Fitzgerald’s view of the American Dream in the 1920’s, as portrayed in *The Great Gatsby* and “Winter Dreams”? To what extent and in what ways would Fitzgerald’s critique still apply in our culture today?

### Multi-Genre Text Set that connects to Essential Thematic Questions

- “Class Matters” newspaper
- *The Great Gatsby*
- “Winter Dream”
- “The American Dream: A Biography”
- “Who Wants to Be a Millionaire: Changing Conceptions of the American Dream”
- “The Reproduction of Privilege”
- “How Fares the Dream?”
- “Rethinking the American Dream”
- “The American Dream’s Empty Promise”
- “Waking Up from the American Dream”
- “America and I”

### Stylistic Essential Question

How do tone, mood, diction, imagery, symbolism, and characterization contribute to the meaning of a work of fiction?

### Key Vocabulary

Tone, mood, diction, imagery, character, setting, symbolism; social class, economic class, economic mobility

### Multi-Genre Text Set that connects to Essential Stylistic Questions
| **Socratic Seminar** | **Analytical Writing*** | **Summative Assessment In-Class Close Reading/Timed Writing:**  
How do tone, mood, diction, imagery, symbolism, and characterization contribute to the meaning of “Babylon Revisited”? |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Creative Writing</strong>*</td>
<td><strong>Write a scene that develops a strong mood using effective diction choices and imagery.</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| **Reflective Writing*** | **Journal Entries:** Students will share daily entry with a partner, then all students are encouraged to read theirs aloud – a limit of three a day. Students will type up their entries at the end of the unit. The journal entry packet will have**  
  - a title page  
  - a table of contents  
  - one entry designated as a “must read” for the teacher  
  **Teacher writes no comment on the packet or the designated entry – just a number from 1 through 9, 9 being the highest score. Students may choose any of these entries for their Portfolio.** |
| **Mini-Lessons on Writer’s Craft and Style** | **● Characterization**  
**● Symbolism**  
**● Imagery**  
**● Tone**  
**● Mood**  
**Diction**  
Others as needed for student revision |
<p>| <strong>Class time for feedback on and revision of writing</strong> | <strong>Day 9: Creative Writing Peer Review</strong> |
| <strong>Clearly Defined Publishing Opportunities</strong> | <strong>“What is Your American Dream” essay npr.org/dreams</strong> |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Classwork</th>
<th>Homework</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>11/15 A</td>
<td>Journal: What is an American? What is the American Dream? How has it</td>
<td>Read the short story “Winter Dreams” on page 840 and complete Dialectical Journal, looking for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11/16 B</td>
<td>changed over time? To what extent is it still alive today? (20 minutes)</td>
<td>elements that relate to the American Dream questions.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Unit Overview/Syllabus</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Give Prompt for Analysis Essay (to be done in class, Day #9):</td>
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<td>*Citing at least 3 texts we’ve studied in this unit, answer the question:</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>What is the American Dream?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(5 Minutes)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Considerations During This Unit:</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Can America achieve equal rights?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Why are there “haves” and “have nots”?</td>
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<td>Background Information: Fitzgerald, The Roaring 20’s, and The Great</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Gatsby, <em>social class</em>, <em>economic class</em>, <em>economic mobility</em>. (15 minutes)</td>
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<td>Discussion of “the American Dream” in response to criticism of it. (25</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>minutes)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td><em>(<a href="http://www.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,2117662_2117682_2117680,00.html">http://www.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,2117662_2117682_2117680,00.html</a>)</em>: The American Dream: A Biography (<em>Time</em> magazine)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>11/19 A</td>
<td>Discuss Homework: Journal Entry about “Winter Dreams” Explain your</td>
<td>Read <em>The Great Gatsby</em> pages 1-30 and complete Dialectical Journal entry</td>
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<td></td>
<td>11/20 B</td>
<td>responses to the main characters in “Winter Dreams” and what happens</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>to them at the end. What dreams are involved in this story, what</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>happens to those dreams, and why?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>What do you think the author is trying to say about the “American Dream”</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>in this story?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Intro/Historical Context (15 min)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Background readings, videos</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Essential Stylistic Question: How does an author use diction choices</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>and imagery to develop the tone and mood of a passage?</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Direct Instruction</strong>: Tone, mood, diction and imagery</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Application:

Distribute copies of *The Great Gatsby* & explain homework: Emphasize that **annotations are crucial to participation in final Socratic Seminar.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Monday Night</th>
<th>Tuesday Night</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>11/26 A</td>
<td>11/27 B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discuss Homework: Intro/Historical Context (15 min)</td>
<td>Read <em>The Great Gatsby</em> pages 31-60 and complete Dialectical Journal entry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Monday Night</th>
<th>Tuesday Night</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>11/28 A</td>
<td>11/29 B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Review Homework: Make chart paper posters labeled “Tone,” “Diction,” “Mood,” “Characterization,” “Symbolism,” and “Imagery.” Have students list examples from their annotations. (15 minutes)</td>
<td>Read <em>The Great Gatsby</em> pages 61-90 and complete Dialectical Journal entry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

   **Journal:** What do we know about Gatsby so far? What predictions can you make about him? What do we know about Nick Carraway? Who or what is T.J. Eckleburg? What do these characters have to do with the American Dream? Discuss Responses (30 minutes)

Introduce Creative Writing Assignment (45 minutes):

- Write a scene that develops a strong mood using effective diction choices and imagery
- Use scene from *Midnight in Paris* as an example
- As a class, determine the mood, effective diction choices, and imagery from the clip. Then have students write that scene in 5 minutes or so.
- Students brainstorm topics for their own scenes. What mood am I trying to create? What kinds of words would contribute to that mood?
- Start drafting
  *(Due Day 9 for Peer Review; in final form Day 10.)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Monday Night</th>
<th>Tuesday Night</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>11/30 A</td>
<td>12/3 B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Journal Entry: What object in your bedroom symbolizes who you are? Explain. (10 min)</td>
<td>Read <em>The Great Gatsby</em> pages 91-120 and complete Dialectical Journal entry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Symbolism (45 min)
- John Steinbeck’s “The Chrysanthemums”
- From *Gatsby*:
  - T.J. Eckleburg
  - West Egg vs. East Egg
  - the green light
  - East vs. Middle West
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6</th>
<th>12/4  A</th>
<th>12/5  B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Journal Entry (15 min):</strong> In what ways do the texts we’ve studied so far in this unit inform your understanding of your own Essential Question?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|    | **Lesson on Characterization:**
|    | Review the following archetypes as necessary:
|    | hero/heroine
|    | trickster
|    | faithful
|    | companion
|    | outsider/outcast
|    | rugged/individualist
|    | innocent
|    | villain
|    | caretaker
|    | Earth
|    | Mother
|    | rebel
|    | misfit
|    | Have students assign each character to one of the archetypes above. If there is not a fit, explain why. (See handout)
|    | Then have students **score each of the following characters based on their moral codes**: 1 being the least moral and 5 being the most. Justify your decisions with specific examples from the text:
|    | • Jay Gatsby
|    | • Nick Carraway
|    | • Daisy Buchanan
|    | • Jordan Baker
|    | • Tom Buchanan
|    | • Myrtle Wilson
|    | Discuss the complexities of these characters and how they break the confines of the archetypes. How does our understanding of characterization in *The Great Gatsby* contribute to our understanding of the human condition? The American Dream? And therefore, *The Great Gatsby* as (effective) literature?
|    | **Summative:** Close Reading of [passage from Gatsby] and explain how the author uses diction choices and imagery to convey a tone or mood.
<p>|    | <strong>Read <em>The Great Gatsby</em> pages 121-150 and complete Dialectical Journal entry</strong> |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Date 1</th>
<th>Date 2</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 7   | 12/6 A | 12/7   | **Journal Entry:** Is Gatsby a noble character? Explain and support your ideas with evidence from the text. (20 min)  
Allegory & Allusion (30 min)  
- Read Aloud of *Terrible Things* or *Lorax*. Mention *Avatar* as allegory for environmental destruction  
- Irving, “The Devil & Tom Walker”  
Summative: Close Reading of unfamiliar text—“Babylon Revisited” excerpt (40 min)  
  - Focus of Close Reading is on stylistic choices: tone, mood, diction, imagery, symbolism, characterization  | Read *The Great Gatsby* pages 151-180 (end) and complete Dialectical Journal entry |
| 8   | 12/10 A | 12/11 B | **Chart Paper Group Activity:** Tell me everything you can about the American Dream—let the kids loose. (15 min)  
Journal: What is your American Dream? Compare/contrast your American Dream to that presented in any of the texts we’ve studied in this unit. (20 min)  
Visit the npr.org American Dream website and have students read several of the reader submissions about their own American Dreams. Use Kelly Gallagher’s Article of the Week or [http://englishcompanion.com/classroom/digitalTextbook/index.htm#readworld](http://englishcompanion.com/classroom/digitalTextbook/index.htm#readworld) for additional nonfiction resources. | |
| 9   | 12/12 A | 12/13 B | **Discuss the ending, significance, symbolism, etc.** (20 min)  
Creative Writing Peer Review: (30 min) Have students apply assignment rubric to their partner’s scene to make suggestions for revision. | - Make Final Revisions to Creative Writing Assignment  
- Type up journal entries. Each “packet” should have  
  - A title page  
  - A table of contents  
  - A designation as to which entry is a “must read.”  
*All journal entries and drafts should be kept as separate documents for |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12/14</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Creative Writing Due Today</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Publishing: Students share their Creative Writing pieces and provide feedback (notecards)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/17</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Possible inclusion in the Portfolio.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/18</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Socratic Seminar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Focus of Seminar is thematic with stylist support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- 2 seminars with discussion in between</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/19</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12/20</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Close Reading Analysis Essay: “Babylon Revisited”</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/21</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Winter Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/20</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/21</td>
<td>B</td>
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Prepare Annotations. Questions for Socratic Seminar will be generated by group(s) at beginning of discussion(s).