**English 252**

**Writing Improvement**

**Section #53044**

**Tuesdays/Thursdays**

**12:00-1:50pm in CCI 202**

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**Syllabus for English 252, Section #53044**

**Writing Improvement, 4 units**

**Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12:00pm-1:50pm in CCI 202**

# Class Information

Mrs. Berg, Instructor Email: emily.berg@reedleycollege.edu

Office: Faculty Annex 6 (directly behind the SOC building) Phone: 638-3641, ext. 3150

Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays from 10am-11:50am; Fridays from 11-11:50am. *Other times may be scheduled outside these hours as needed.*

**Course Description**

In this course, students will develop their writing skills by composing short essays (both in and out of class), while learning how to brainstorm, outline, draft, revise, and edit. In the process, they will work on developing paragraphs and correcting basic grammar errors. This course is a companion to ENGL 262 and prepares students for ENGL 125. Students must successfully complete written course work to receive credit. Placement for this course is designated by the college assessment process.

**Grading Policy**

English 252 is a **credit/no credit course**. This means that you will not receive a letter grade (A,B,C,D,F) for this class on your transcript. Rather, you will receive a CR (credit for a letter grade of A,B, or C) or NC (no credit for a letter grade of D or F). I will calculate your grades based on the following traditional grading scale, however, during the semester:

**Passing: A=90-100%; B=80-89%; C=70-79%;** Failing: D=60-69%; F=0-59%

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| **Assignments and the Final Due Dates** | **Approximate**  **Point Value** | **Your Grade** |
| Essay #1 | 100 |  |
| Essay #2 | 100 |  |
| Essay #3 | 100 |  |
| Midterm (In Class, Timed Essay) | 100 |  |
| Essay #4 | 150 |  |
| Essay #5 | 150 |  |
| Final (In Class, Timed Essay) | 150 |  |
| Homework (weeks 1-9) | 25 |  |
| Homework (weeks 10-17) | 25 |  |
| Grammar Tests | 100 |  |
| **APPROXIMATE TOTAL POINT VALUE:** | **1,000** |  |

Grades are promptly posted on Blackboard; please look on Blackboard for your current grade in the class. If you have trouble accessing your grades, you are always welcome to come discuss your progress in the class with me during my office hours.

**Changes to the Syllabus/Calendar/Grade Value**

The instructor reserves the right to make changes as necessary for the benefit of the class to change policies on the syllabus or dates on the calendar. Missing class is not an excuse for not being aware of any changes that are made to the calendar or the syllabus.

**Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes**

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| Upon completion of this course, students will be able to: |
| 1. Write a paper of at least 500 words with an introduction, body of at least one paragraph, and a conclusion. This paper will include:    * a thesis statement    * unified supporting details for each body paragraph which begin with a topic sentence    * an evaluation and analysis of ideas at the appropriate course level    * complete sentences which includes correct capitalization, spelling, use of homophones, etc.    * an avoidance of major grammatical errors including verb tense issues, subject-verb agreement, pronoun agreement problems, fragments, fused sentences and comma splices    * appropriate use of academic language and descriptive vocabulary    * correct usage of MLA format    * writing that is free from plagiarism 2. Plan and revise with guidance, employing all stages of the writing process when necessary. 3. Write an in-class paper with a beginning, middle, and end that communicates a clear idea. |

**Required Texts and Materials—Bring all of these things to every class:**

Goldstein, Janet M. and Beth Johnson. *Voices and Values: A Reader for Writers*. West Berlin: Townsend

Press, 2002.

Langan, John. *Clear Thinking and Writing*. West Berlin: Townsend Press, 2010.

Langan, John. *English Essentials: Short Version*. West Berlin: Townsend Press, 2010.

*Highly recommended*: A pocket dictionary (such as Merriam-Webster) or a computerized portable dictionary.

**Note**: I have placed several copies of all of these textbooks on reserve at Reedley College’s library for you to use, should you have trouble getting the textbooks. In other words, there is no excuse for not having the textbooks you need for every class.

**Supplies Needed for Every Class** (and I reserve the right to dismiss you from class if you do not have these materials at every class meeting):

* a flash drive
* a set of several different colored highlighters
* plenty of lined paper
* some computer paper (in case we run out in lab)
* pencils and blue or black ink pens
* a binder with organizational tabs to keep all of your work for this class

Additional materials needed: two examination blue books (size 8 ½ x 11) for the midterm and final.

**Homework**

Homework assignments (based on grammar work, drafts of the writing assignments, and reading assignments from the textbooks) are **checked at the beginning of class only** for full credit. **If you are late (or absent) for whatever reason, your work is late**. If you were late, absent, or you did not do your work on time, you still have the opportunity to earn partial credit until the midterm for assignments given during weeks 1-9 and the final for assignments given weeks 10-17. The homework grades will be added to your total grade at the midterm and final times only; once a grade is entered for homework at those times, you cannot make up any missing work for that time period.

**Attendance Policies**

Important skills are learned in every class meeting—when you are absent, you miss a lot! Please be aware **that a total of more than two weeks of absences for whatever reason will result in a drop** from this class. Keep in mind that this is a college class—an absence, no matter the reason, is still an absence. That being said, it is common courtesy to inform me should you need to miss class, especially if you miss more than one class in a row. There’s few things more infuriating for teachers than a student who disappears for a few class sessions and then shows up wanting to know if he’s missed anything or expecting to fit right back in.

If you need to miss class, it is your responsibility to get assignments and handouts and to make sure that they are turned in before class begins. I suggest that you find a reliable person in class to turn in papers for you, get homework assignments, and pick up work for you should you need to be absent from a class. I post all of your homework and all class activities in Blackboard (find it in the “Weekly Schedule” folder).

Should you need to be tardy more than 5 minutes of any class or need to leave more than 5 minutes early, I will count that as an absence. Tardies and early departures are disruptive and will not be tolerated; **two tardies or early departures of more than 5 minutes will result in one absence**. If you arrive late, it is your responsibility to check in with me at the end of class, or your absence will remain on your record. Please come in quietly and take the closest available seat by the door to minimize disruptions to the class.

# Individual Conferences

Occasionally throughout the semester, I will hold mandatory individual conferences to discuss your progress in the class or to review your drafts with you. Please make sure you arrive early for this appointment with the homework due that class period ready to show me during your appointment. Missing a conference counts as a class absence, and you still need to check in with me regarding your draft or your grade—you will then need to reschedule your appointment during my office hours.

**E-Mail**

When you send me an email, you must be specific in the message and always **sign your name**. Your email address does not necessarily identify who you are. I do not read or respond to email if I don’t know the sender. Put your name and the class name in the subject line of the email.

**In addition, remember, when you email me, you are not text messaging or emailing a friend.** You need to run spell check and think about the way you are writing; for example, do not use lower case i’s when using the first person pronoun “I” and address me in a considerate, respectful manner. I will not respond if I cannot read what you have written, and I certainly won’t respond if you are being disrespectful.

In terms of response time, please keep in mind that you need to give me at least twenty-four hours to respond during the work week only (meaning I will not typically respond over the weekend). Do not send me multiple copies of the same email, thinking this will get me to respond faster. I do not text students, and I will respond to your email as soon as I can. That being said, if I have not responded during the workweek within twenty-four hours during the workweek, give me a call or email me again to make sure I did get your first message.

# Examinations

**All quizzes and examinations cannot be made up**; if you know in advance that you cannot attend on a quiz or exam day, be sure to speak with me at least forty-eight hours in advance to make alternate plans before the tests are given. Anyone who does not show up to a quiz or exam without speaking to me in advance to make alternate plans will earn a zero, no matter what the reason is.

Please refrain from talking during examinations, and you may not leave the classroom unless you have turned in your exam and you have been instructed that you may leave when you are finished. You may only use the materials specified on the directions of the exam, and you may only use your own materials. Absolutely no electronic devises may be used or be on your desk during an exam. Should you be found in violation of these test regulations, you will be immediately dismissed from the exam with no credit.

**Essays—Getting the Work Done on Time**

For each essay assignment, you are required to submit outlines and several drafts before the final draft is due. To receive full credit for your work, your drafts need to be on time and of substantial length –the same page requirement as the final draft assignment**.**

**If you are absent for whatever reason on the day a final draft is due, it is nonetheless your responsibility to turn in the work on time**. You will need to submit the paper to me, in class, by email, or in my mailbox **before class begins** to receive full credit for the assignment.

Any essays written during the semester will **only be** **accepted up to one week** after the deadline for any credit. For each class meeting that you submit the essays late, **a full letter grade will be deducted** from the overall grade. Because Essay #5 will be turned in at the final, no late work for this paper only will be accepted.

**Turning in Final Drafts**

The following work must be done before class to submit a final draft of a paper for your paper to be on time:

1. **Submit the final draft of the paper in our Blackboard site to Turnitin.com**. Before you upload the file, double check to make sure that you are submitting the correct draft of this assignment. Upload the file to the Blackboard site (find it in this essay’s details folder). Save your file with your first and last name plus the essay number in it (e.g. the file should be called “John Smith Essay 1.docx”), and make sure you save this file as a doc or .docx or .rtf file. Take note of the percentage score you got, and open the report to find out why you got the score you did. Papers must be uploaded at least one hour before our class begins.
2. **Prepare a packet to be submitted at the beginning of class**. The packets must be stapled together in this order:
   1. Rubric on top. Write your name on the rubric, and on the bottom of the rubric, write your Turnitin.com originality score and a few sentences explaining why you got the score you did.
   2. Final draft of your paper. Highlight on the final draft: your thesis; the topic sentences for all body paragraphs; transitional words and phrases.
   3. All other work done on this paper (from freewrites to outlines to rough drafts).

If these instructions are not followed, your essay will be returned to you to complete for a late grade.

**Essays--Rewriting** **Policy**

You are allowed to and encouraged to rewrite **only one essay over the semester to try to earn up to one letter grade higher** than the final grade you received on the paper. Please note you can only rewrite your work if you turned in the final draft of the paper on time. You have up to one week from when I return your essays to rewrite the paper. Here’s the steps you will need to follow to rewrite your paper:

1. Once I have returned the essays to the class, you have up to one week from then to rewrite the paper. On the rewritten draft, **highlight exactly what you have changed in the document itself**.
2. Then, after the last page, include a separate typed paragraph explaining exactly what changes you have made and explaining how these changes improved your paper. I will only award a grade higher for papers with substantial, significant changes in them and for people who have followed these directions.
3. Turn into me the rewritten copy with the highlighting and your explanation of what you changed.
4. **You will not have the opportunity to rewrite Essay #5, as grades are due soon after you turn in that final paper.**

**Essay Formatting: How Should My Papers Look?**

For all work you submit, follow MLA formatting:

* Font set for TIMES NEW ROMAN 12
* Line spacing set for DOUBLE
* Entire essay is DOUBLE line spaced only—no more and no less ANYWHERE
* The margins are set to 1” on all sides.
* In the PARAGRAPH menu, SPACING **BEFORE** and **AFTER** is set for ZERO (i.e. no extra spaces in between paragraphs)
* Page numbers have been INSERTED (not typed) into the upper right hand corner beginning with page one. This is formatted into the header, appearing ½ inch from the top of the page
* Student’s last name appears before the page number—AND there is a space between the name and page number.
* On page one ONLY, in the top left hand corner of the page, the following appears 1 inch below the top of the page.
  + Student’s Name
  + Instructor’s Name
  + Course
  + Due Date for Essay
* The above information is double line spaced.
* The essay has an appropriate title, which is centered—USING the computer’s function to center (not tabbed or spaced into the center). The title is a creative one, not merely the assignment’s name. The title has every major word capitalized, and there are no quotation marks around the title. The title is the same size font, and it is not italicized or in all capital letters.
* The Work(s) Cited is the last page of the essay—INSERT NEW PAGE. The works cited page is the last formatted page of the essay, so it also follows all of the formatting details listed above.
* Turn in all work with your final draft (all brainstorming, outlines, and drafts).
* On your final draft, highlight your thesis statement and all of the topic sentences in your body paragraphs.
* Staple an English 252 rubric on the front of the final draft of your essay.

**Please note:** Should I discover while reading your essay that you have not followed the above formatting expectations, run spell check, or sufficiently proofread and edited your work, I will discontinue reading and return the essay to you. You will then have until the following week to revise the paper and resubmit it with the first paper you submitted. The highest grade such a “returned” paper can receive is a “C.”

**Cheating/Plagiarism**

***Bottom line***: do not copy someone else’s words or ideas without giving them credit. Do not use another student’s paper as your own. Do not use a paper you wrote from another class in this class. Do not have another person write the paper for you. All of these are forms of cheating. You will receive a zero on the assignment (whether it is something plagiarized on your papers or on the discussion board), you will not be allowed to rewrite the assignment, and a report will be filed with the administration for their review. Please be advised that you will submit your final drafts of your papers in Turnitin.com, so if you do plagiarize your papers, you will be caught.

# Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you have a verified need for an academic accommodation or materials in alternate media (i.e., Braille, large print, electronic text, etc.) per the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, please contact me as soon as possible.

**Reminders/Tips for Success**

1. **Electronic Devices**: **Please turn off cell phones and pagers during class and put them away, off your desk**. It is unacceptable to set your phone on discreet and leave it on top of your desk, or to text during class—it is disruptive to you, your fellow students, and your instructor when you check your messages and calls during class. Please do not use or have on any other electronic equipment during class (I-pods, cell phones, laptops, etc.), including during lab time. Without a doubt, do not answer your phone in class. **If you appear to be more interested in texting during class than paying attention, I will ask you to leave for the day with an absence**.
2. **Disruptive behavior** during class will not be tolerated for the sake of our learning environment; I reserve the right to ask you to leave the class with an absence if you are disruptive of other’s learning. Disruptive behavior includes (but is not limited to) talking, passing notes, arguing, eating food, sleeping during class, working on assignments for our class or other classes other than the one being covered in class at the time, receiving cell phone calls during class, text messaging during class, having your cell phone on your desk, not having the materials needed for class, or having your head on your desk. **The first time a student violates these rules, he will receive a verbal warning from the teacher. The second time (and any time thereafter), the student will be dismissed from the class with an absence**.
3. In this class we will occasionally read, view, and discuss controversial subject matter. This is college, so adult topics should be expected. These could include issues such as race, sexuality, gender, and cultures different from your own. When you are faced with new ideas, ideas that are different than your own, or issues that make you uncomfortable, I expect you to keep an open mind and never to lower yourself into discriminating or using a mocking, harassing, or belittling tone of voice to others.
4. Be sure to keep all of your work during the semester, especially since you will be asked to use all of your papers when writing the last essay assignment. Also, consider that accidents happen, teachers lose papers, gradebooks get stolen—protect yourself by keeping copies of your work, both hard copies and electronic copies.
5. During our lab time, I expect you to work quietly on assigned work. If you are finished with a writing assignment, then I can read your assignment before you turn it in. You can always work on rewriting other writing assignments during lab times. You can also work on homework for our class. Lab time is not a time to browse the Internet (except of course if you are researching a writing assignment for our class). You may be asked to leave if you are not complying with these guidelines. **Do not only rely on our lab time to complete your writing assignments. Many times, we will use lab time to do other work.** You will need to work on your papers outside of class time also. There is a computer lab in the library. There are computers available at the public library in downtown Reedley that you can use.
6. Should you discover that you are unable to regularly attend class for whatever reason, you need to discuss this with me as soon as possible. Telling me of work schedule changes, illness, family emergencies, etc. after missing several days or weeks is unacceptable.
7. Showing up to class is not enough; it’s true that being present helps you to learn, but if you do not do the assignments, you will not pass. Turning in the work is not enough: just doing the assignments does not warrant a passing grade. You need to be doing passing work to pass the class.
8. **Important dates:**
   1. **Semester begins: Monday, January 7**
   2. **MLK holiday: Monday, January 21**
   3. **Lincoln holiday: Friday, February 15**
   4. **Washington holiday: Monday, February 18**
   5. **Last day to drop the class without a “W” on your transcript: Friday, January 25**
   6. **Last day to drop the class (a letter grade will be assigned after this date): Friday, March 8**
   7. **Spring break: March 25-29**
   8. **Our final will be held on Thursday, May 16 from 12-1:50pm in CCI 202.**

**English 252 Calendar—Section #53044**

The dates below are the days by which the assignments (including the reading and essays) **must be completed**. Occasionally, this calendar may have to change as the class’s needs change over the course of the semester. *Missing class is not an excuse for not being aware of any changes that are made to this calendar.*

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| **Date** | **Text Assignment—**  ***Voices and Values (VV)* and *Clear Thinking and Writing (CTW)*** | **Grammar Assignment—*English Essentials*** | **Due Dates/Notes** |
| **Week 1**  Jan. 8 | -- | -- |  |
| Week 1  Jan. 10 | “Thank You,” page 133 from VV.  Chapter 1, “An Introduction to Point and Support” pages 1-3 and Chapter 2, “More about Point and Support,” pages 4-6 in CTW. | Chapter 1, “Subjects and Verbs,” pages 3-7 | Syllabus quiz due |
| **Week 2**  Jan. 15 | “A Small Victory,” page 63 in VV.  Chapter 3, “Point and Support Outlines” pages 7-9 and Chapter 4, “Two Common Mistakes in Writing,” pages 10-16 in CTW. |  | Reading quiz week 1 |
| Week 2  Jan. 17 | “All the Good Things,” page 203 in VV.  Chapter 5, “Organization,” pages 17-23 in CTW. | Chapter 2, “Irregular Verbs,” pages 9-13 | Outline for Essay #1 due |
| **Week 3**  Jan. 22 | “From Horror to Hope,” page 85 in VV.  Chapter 6, “The Difference between a Paragraph and an Essay,” pages 24-28 in CTW. |  | Reading quiz week 2 |
| Week 3  Jan. 24 | “Migrant Child to College Woman” page 96 in VV.  Chapter 7, “The Writing Process,” pages 29-34 in CTW. | Chapter 3, “Subject-Verb Agreement,” pages 15-19 | Typed, full-page rough draft for Essay #1 due |

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| **Date** | **Text Assignment—**  ***Voices and Values (VV)* and *Clear Thinking and Writing (CTW)*** | **Grammar Assignment—*English Essentials*** | **Due Dates/Notes** |
| **Week 4**  Jan. 29 | “Responsibility” page 151 in VV. |  | Reading quiz week 3  EE Chapters 1-3 Test |
| Week 4  Jan. 31 | “Night Watch,” page 125 in VV | Chapter 4, “Sentence Types,” pages 21-25 | **Typed, full page final draft for Essay #1 due. Turn in with all prior work. Highlight thesis and topic sentences on the final draft.** |
| **Week 5**  Feb. 5 | “Winners, Losers, or Just Kids,” page 143 in VV |  | Reading quiz week 4 |
| Week 5  Feb. 7 | “The Bystander Effect,” page 169 in VV | Chapter 5, “Fragments I,” pages 27-31 |  |
| **Week 6**  Feb. 12 | “An Electronic Fog Has Settled Over America,” p. 377 in VV |  | Reading quiz week 5 |
| Week 6  Feb. 14 | “The Quiet Hour,” p. 386 in VV | Chapter 6, “Fragments II,” pages 33-37 | Outline for Essay #2 due. |
| **Week 7**  Feb. 19 | “Rudeness at the Movies,” p. 395 in VV |  | Reading quiz week 6  EE Chapters 4-6 Test |
| Week 7  Feb. 21 | “My Daughter Smokes,” p. 404 in VV | Chapter 7, “Run-ons and Comma Splices I,” pages 39-43 | Typed, full page rough draft for Essay #2 due. |
| **Week 8**  Feb. 26 | “Here’s to Your Health,” p. 413 in VV |  | Reading quiz week 7 |
| Week 8  Feb. 28 | “A Drunken Ride, A Tragic Aftermath,” p. 422 in VV | Chapter 7, “Run-ons and Comma Splices II,” pages 45-48 | **Typed, full page final draft for Essay #2 due. Turn in with all prior work. Highlight thesis and topic sentences on the final draft. Upload the final draft to Turnitin.com one hour before class.** |

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| **Date** | **Text Assignment—**  ***Voices and Values (VV)* and *Clear Thinking and Writing (CTW)*** | **Grammar Assignment—*English Essentials*** | **Due Dates/Notes** |
| **Week 9**  Mar. 5 | “What do Children Owe Their Parents?” p. 221 in VV |  | Reading quizweek 8  Last day to submit any missing homework from weeks 1-9  **In Class Timed Essay Midterm, Part 1** |
| Week 9  Mar. 7 | “Shame,” p. 232 in VV | Chapter 9, “Commas,” pages 51-55 | **In Class Timed Essay Midterm, Part 2** |
| **Week 10**  Mar. 12 | “Rowing the Bus,” p. 242 in VV |  | Reading quiz week 9  EE Chapters 7-9 Test |
| Week 10  Mar. 14 | “Bullies in School,” p. 252 in VV | Chapter 10, “Apostrophes,” pages 57-61 | Outline for Essay #3 due. |
| **Week 11**  Mar. 19 | “Dare to Think Big,” p. 279 in VV |  | Reading quiz week 10 |
| Week 11  Mar. 21 | “A Change of Attitude,” p. 288 in VV | Chapter 11, “Quotation Marks,” pages 63-67 | Typed, full page rough draft for Essay #3 due.  *SPRING BREAK*  *MARCH 25-29* |
| **Week 12**  Apr. 2 | “Living the Madison Avenue Lie,” p. 437 in VV |  | Reading quiz week 11  **Typed, full page final draft for Essay #3 due. Turn in with all prior work. Highlight thesis and topic sentences on the final draft. Upload the final draft to Turnitin.com one hour before class.** |
| Week 12  Apr. 4 | “Staying Power,” p. 447 in VV | Chapter 12, “Homonyms,” pages 69-73 |  |

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| **Date** | **Text Assignment—**  ***Voices and Values (VV)* and *Clear Thinking and Writing (CTW)*** | **Grammar Assignment—*English Essentials*** | **Due Dates/Notes** |
| **Week 13**  Apr. 9 | “From Reading to Nonreading,” p. 300 in VV |  | Reading quiz week 12  EE Chapters 10-12 Test |
| Week 13  Apr. 11 | “Reading to Survive,” p. 309 in VV | Chapter 13, “Capital Letters,” pages 75-79 | Outline for Essay #4 due. |
| **Week 14**  Apr. 16 | “Flour Children,” p. 323 in VV |  | Reading quiz week 13 |
| Week 14  Apr. 18 | “In Praise of the F Word,” p. 332 in VV | Chapter 14, “Parallelism,” pages 81-85 | Typed, full page rough draft for Essay #4 due. |
| **Week 15**  Apr. 23 | “The Professor is a Dropout,” p. 340 in VV |  | Reading quiz week 14 |
| Week 15  Apr. 25 | “Learning Survival Skills,” p. 353 in VV | Chapter 21, “Word Choice,” pages 132-137 | **Typed, full page final draft for Essay #4 due. Turn in with all prior work. Highlight thesis and topic sentences on the final draft. Upload the final draft to Turnitin.com one hour before class.** |
| **Week 16**  Apr. 30 | “Anxiety: Challenge by Another Name,” p. 159 in VV |  | Reading quiz week 15  EE Chapters 13-14, 21 Test |
| Week 16  May 2 | “Don’t Let Stereotypes Warp Your Judgments,” p. 180 in VV | Chapter 28, “More About Commas,” pages 183-188 | Outline for Essay #5 due. |
| **Week 17**  May 7 | “Dealing with Feelings,” p. 190 in VV |  | Reading quiz week 16  Typed, full page rough draft for Essay #5 due. |
| Week 17  May 9 | “Tickets to Nowhere,” p. 369 in VV | Chapter 29, “More about Apostrophes,” pages 189-194 | Last day to submit any missing homework from weeks 10-17 |
| **FINAL** |  |  | **FINAL—Thursday, May 16, 12:00-1:50pm; Essay #5 due.** **Upload the final draft to Turnitin.com one hour before class.** |

**ESSAY PROMPTS**

**Essay #1: Gratitude**

C:\Users\eb009\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\W1PU75FG\MC900434475[1].wmf

As you look back at your life, to which three people are you especially grateful? Write an essay showing exactly how these people have made a difference in your life. Alternatively, you may write your entire essay about one person, devoting each supporting paragraph to an aspect of that person’s important role in your life.

An effective thesis statement for this essay might be like one of the following:

* I will never forget my best friend in the first grade, my sixth grade math teacher, and my wonderful aunt.
* My cousin’s constant physical presence, finances, and emotional support have made a real difference in my life.

In your **introduction**, begin with some sort of a statement that gives an overview of the assignment without announcing it (e.g. avoid beginning with "In this essay, I will discuss this essay I have read…").   After the overview, provide a short summary of Alex Haley’s essay (no more than three sentences). Remember, titles of essays go in “quotation marks,” and titles of books are *italicized.* You will then want to transition from the essay to yourself, giving a little background (summary) of your own relevant experiences. Finally, transition from yourself to your thesis.

In your **body paragraphs**, devote each paragraph to one of these people, including an especially dramatic example or several smaller examples of what that person has done for which you are grateful. In either case, **provide plentiful examples** to illustrate what the person has done.

In your **conclusion**, bring up once again Alex Haley’s essay. Be sure to reflect on the significance of your own gratitude (“So what?”). What is important about the fact that you are grateful to these people?

The final draft will be at least **two typed pages** that follow MLA formatting.

**Essay #2: Responsibility**

In his essay entitled, “Responsibility,” author Scott Peck provides what is in a sense a lengthy definition of the word “responsibility.” He describes what responsibility is, gives vivid examples of irresponsible behavior, and suggests the negative consequences of living without a sense of personal responsibility.

Write a paper in which you define another desirable human trait, such as courage, kindness, maturity, wisdom, patience, compassion, perseverance, or tolerance. As Peck does, give your readers clear examples of how people behave when they possess that trait, as well as how they behave when they do not.

The final draft will be **at least** two typed pages that follow MLA formatting.

Here’s some more specific details:

**Paragraph #1: Introduction**.  This will be structured just like Essay #1 (M. Scott Peck's "Responsibility" summary, transition to the desirable human trait, finally a **thesis**).   
  
**Paragraph #2: First Body paragraph**.  This is where you **define in general terms what your desirable human trait means**, just as M. Scott Peck did in the first few body paragraphs of his essay. In your topic sentence for this paragraph, write your own definition about what this word means. You are encouraged to look up your word in the dictionary to increase your understanding of this term, but restate the definition by writing it in your own words. Provide lots of general examples of situations where individuals demonstrate this trait. Make sure, too, that you avoid using first person pronouns (such as “I” or “we”) as well as second person pronouns (such as “you” or “your”).  
  
**Paragraph #3: Second body paragraph**.  In this paragraph, you will write about the positive aspects of the trait by providing a **detailed example of someone who displays this desirable human trait**.  This individual can be someone you know personally or someone you have heard about in the news.  Make sure that the person is not a fictional character, but a real person.  Make sure that you include a specific example of when this person showed this quality.   
  
**Paragraph #4: Third body paragraph**.  In this paragraph, you will write about the negative aspects of this trait by providing a **detailed example of someone who displays the OPPOSITE of this desirable human trait**.  This individual can be someone you know personally or someone you have heard about in the news.  Make sure that the person is not a fictional character, but a real person. Make sure that you include a specific example of when this person showed the opposite of this quality.  
  
**Paragraph #5: Conclusion**.  "So What?"  You can provide a summary of what you have written in a few sentences, but make sure you reflect on the negative consequences of living without this desirable human trait.



**Essay #3: Community**

**Write an essay in which you identify the problems in your community and the ways in which it could be improved.  You can interpret "your community" to mean within your town or just within your neighborhood.**

The final draft will be **at least** three typed pages that follow MLA formatting.

**Introduction**

**In your introduction paragraph**, introduce your topic. Provide either a story that illustrates how bad or good your community is, and/or give background information about your community from the research we have conducted. Remember, any facts that you provide need to be cited (“According to Fresno County’s Government Web Page, ….”). Provide the name of the web site, not the actual web site address (do not say, “According to <http://www.fresnocountygovernment.com/parlier>” as it is difficult to read). Any words that you provide that are not your own need have quotation marks around them as well as the source listed. Finally, provide a thesis that directly states what improvements you would like to see made to your community.

**Body Paragraphs**

**In each of your three body paragraphs,** identify a problem in your community.  For each problem, make sure you provide *specific* details. Where exactly did you see this problem? What exactly is the problem? You are welcome to provide a story, too, about a specific time that you became aware of this problem. Statistics here would help. If you are saying, for example, that there are not enough jobs in Parlier, you need to show what the unemployment rate is to strengthen your argument. Make sure to cite the information if you provide it.

**Conclusion**

**In your conclusion**, consider how making improvements to these problems would make the community a better, more attractive place to live for you.

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**Essay #4: Comparison (Using a Text)**

**Write an essay in which you compare yourself to an individual from one of the essays from your textbook.** The final draft will be **at least** three typed pages that follow MLA formatting.

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|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Introduction | 1. Begin with some sort of a statement that gives an overview of the assignment without announcing it (e.g. avoid beginning with "In this essay, I will compare myself to an essay I have read…"). 2. After the overview, introduce your chosen essay from *Voices and Values* by providing a short summary of it (no more than three sentences). 3. You will then want to transition from the essay to yourself, giving a little background (summary) of your own experiences. 4. Transition from yourself to your thesis, the last sentence of this paragraph. |
| 1st body paragraph | Begin with a topic sentence.   In this body paragraph, you will want to look at your **first topic of comparison** with your **chosen essay from *Voices and Values***.   Make sure you include specific examples from the essay. If you use exact words from the text, make sure that you use “quotation marks” as well as provide a page number. End with a concluding sentence. |
| 2nd body paragraph | Begin with a topic sentence, including a transition from your last paragraph to this one.   In this body paragraph, you will want to look at your **first topic of comparison** with **yourself**.   Make sure you include specific examples from your own experiences.   End with a concluding sentence. |
| 3rd body paragraph | Begin with a topic sentence, and include a transition from the first topic of comparison to this, your second topic.   In this body paragraph, you will want to look at your **second topic of comparison** with your **chosen essay from *Voices and Values***. Make sure you include specific examples from the essay. If you use exact words from the text, make sure that you use “quotation marks” as well as provide a page number.   End with a concluding sentence. |
| 4th body paragraph | Begin with a topic sentence, including a transition from your last paragraph to this one. In this body paragraph, you will want to look at your **second topic of comparison** with **yourself**.   Make sure you include specific examples from your own experiences. End with a concluding sentence. |
| Conclusion | Final thoughts about the significance of your comparison. What’s important about the connections you have made between the chosen essay and yourself? |

**Essay #5: Writing Self-Reflection**

**Write an essay in which you reflect on your writing in this class over the course of the semester**. Reflect upon your writing ability as you have seen it over the semester. In what ways has your writing improved? What strengths have you developed? Are you writing differently than you did in the past? What do you still need to work on?

In your **introduction**, give an overview of what kinds of experiences you had with writing in the past. Make sure to include a thesis as your last sentence.

In each of your **body paragraphs**, focus on one way in which you feel that you have progressed over this semester as a writer. In each body paragraph, provide a specific example from your essays demonstrating how you have improved. You may also discuss an area that you feel you still need to improve upon in one of the body paragraphs, as well.

In your **conclusion**, reflect upon your writing goals for the future. What do you still need to work on in the next composition class, or what lessons have you learned in this course will you use in the future?

The final draft will be **at least** two-and-a-half typed pages that follow MLA formatting.

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**REFERENCE HANDOUTS**

**Reedley College, English 252 rubric**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Content** | **Organization** | **Conventions** |
| **A** | * Strong thesis statement * Strong topic sentences in all body paragraphs * Strong examples that are relevant, concrete, and specific * Examples support the thesis thoroughly * Ideas are well-thought out and logical | * Strong essay structure, with strong introduction, body, and conclusion * Strong paragraph structure * Strong use of transitions between paragraphs and within paragraphs * Ideas are clearly organized | * Grammatically correct sentences (few if any spelling, mechanical—run-ons, comma splices, or fragments--or punctuation errors) * Variety of sentence structure used * Accurate, concise word choice |
| **B** | * Clear thesis statement * Clear topic sentences in all body paragraphs * Clear examples that need to be slightly more relevant, concrete, or specific. * Examples support the thesis, but in some places need more detail * Details demonstrate depth of thought and logic | * Good essay structure, with clear introduction, body, and conclusion * Good paragraph structure * Good use of transitions between paragraphs and within paragraphs * Ideas are well organized | * Mostly grammatically correct sentences (some spelling, mechanical—run-ons, comma splices, or fragments--or punctuation errors) * Some variety of sentence structure used * Mostly accurate, concise word choice |
| **C** | * Adequate thesis that needs to be more specific * Adequate topic sentences in most body paragraphs * Adequate supporting details that are limited or too general * Examples mostly support the thesis but in many places need more detail * Details attempt to demonstrate some depth of thought and some logic | * Adequate introduction, body, and conclusion * Adequate use of transitions although more may be needed between paragraphs or within paragraphs * Basic sense of organization although there might be some organizational flaws | * Many grammatical errors (many spelling, mechanical—run-ons, comma splices, or fragments--or punctuation errors) * Little variety of sentence structure used * Lack of accurate, concise word choice * Many errors that do not hinder meaning * Overall weak proofreading |
| **D** | * Missing or unclear thesis * Missing or unclear topic sentences * Weak supporting details which are poorly developed or redundant * Most examples don’t support the thesis * Details lack depth of thought and logic | * Weak introduction, body, or conclusion * Introduction present by lacks detail * Few or improperly used transitions. * Weak organization | * Limited control of grammatical errors (many spelling, mechanical—run-ons, comma splices, or fragments--or punctuation errors) * Few attempts made to vary sentence structure * Significant word choice errors that may hinder meaning * Surface errors that may hinder meaning * Very weak proofreading |
| **F** | * Essay is incomplete or doesn’t answer the question * Essay doesn’t fulfill essay requirement | * No introduction, body, or conclusion * No transitions * No organization | * Very little control of grammatical errors (many spelling, mechanical—run-ons, comma splices, or fragments--or punctuation errors) * No attempts made to vary sentence structure * Significant word choice errors that hinder meaning * Major problems with surface errors that hinder meaning * No attempt made to proofread |

**Informal Outline for Essays**

Essay’s Prompt: *(Find what the essay is about. If there is a couple of sentences, find the most important sentence, or combine the ideas into one sentence).*

Essay’s Question: *(Take the essay’s prompt, if it is written as a statement, and turn it into a question. Be sure to write the question as accurately as possible—use the exact words that the teacher has given you to ensure accuracy.)*

Your answer—the Thesis: *(Answer the essay’s questions, and include the reasons why the question is true, a.k.a. the “plan of development”, into your thesis as well).*

Body paragraphs: *(Each one of your reasons why your thesis is true--the plan of development--will have at least one entire paragraph for you to explain with examples. You do not need to write complete sentences at this point.)*

Reason #1 your answer is true: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Example/Details:

Example/Details:

Example/Details:

Reason #2 your answer is true: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Example/Details:

Example/Details:

Example/Details:

Reason #3 your answer is true: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Example/Details:

Example/Details:

Example/Details:

Reason #4 your answer is true: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Example/Details:

Example/Details:

Example/Details:

**Transitional Words and Phrases**

**To Add:**

and, again, and then, besides, equally important, finally, further, furthermore, nor, too, next, lastly, what's more, moreover, in addition, first (second, etc.)

**To Compare:**

whereas, but, yet, on the other hand, however, nevertheless, on the contrary, by comparison, where, compared to, up against, balanced against, but, although, conversely, meanwhile, after all, in contrast, although this may be true

**To Prove:**

because, for, since, for the same reason, obviously, evidently, furthermore, moreover, besides, indeed, in fact, in addition, in any case, that is

**To Show Exception:**

yet, still, however, nevertheless, in spite of, despite, of course, once in a while, sometimes

**To Show Time:**

immediately, thereafter, soon, after a few hours, finally, then, later, previously, formerly, first (second, etc.), next, and then

**To Repeat:**

in brief, as I have said, as I have noted, as has been noted

**To Emphasize:**

definitely, extremely, obviously, in fact, indeed, in any case, absolutely, positively, naturally, surprisingly, always, forever, perennially, eternally, never, emphatically, unquestionably, without a doubt, certainly, undeniably, without reservation

**To Show Sequence**:

first, second, third, and so forth. A, B, C, and so forth. next, then, following this, at this time, now, at this point, after, afterward, subsequently, finally, consequently, previously, before this, simultaneously, concurrently, thus, therefore, hence, next, and then, soon

**To Give an Example:**

for example, for instance, in this case, in another case, on this occasion, in this situation, take the case of, to demonstrate, to illustrate, as an illustration, to illustrate

**To Summarize or Conclude:**

in brief, on the whole, summing up, to conclude, in conclusion, as I have shown, as I have said, hence, therefore, accordingly, thus, as a result, consequently, on the whole

Common Correction Symbols

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Symbol** | **Meaning** | **Example** |
| **frag** | *fragment* | *Because he was not educated*. He was ignored |
| **r-o** | *run on* | The essay was *good the* details support the thesis well. |
| **sp** | *spelling* | She *staid* with her friend during the storm. |
| **vt** | *verb tense error* | His feelings can be *explain* by *study* the source. |
| **wc** | *Word choice very informal* | Well, she is such a hottie. |
| **ww** | *wrong word* | It was not the technology *what* he was interested *with*. |
| **^** | *insert* | In 1960s, spending grew and the deficit jumped. |
|  | *delete* | Despite *of* precautions, chemicals caused *a* pollution. |
|  | *paragraph* | It wasn't my best day. Another problem I had . . . |
|  | *rephrase; find a better way to write it* | Due to the fact that they cannot work, the government pays for the treatment. |
|  | *Some other grammar, spelling, or mechanical error. Writer, check it out to make your corrections.* | For the reason have gone. |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **TW** | *Transitional words and phrases needed here.* | *Use words such as for example; however; also; first; next; finally. See your textbook for more examples.* |
| **TS** | *Topic Sentence needed here* | *A topic sentence is the first sentence of each body paragraph; it tells exactly what that paragraph will be about.* |

Self-Evaluation Chart for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*Directions*: Write below the top mistakes made for each essay when it is returned; we will add to this list throughout the term. **Keep this paper** as a reference for what you will need to work on in your papers.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Essay** | **Content** | **Organization** | **Conventions** |
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|  |  |  |  |
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