

Gorman Learning Center Writing Program Grade 11

Before responding to any of the prompts, please read the Submission Guidelines for Students, available online under the Writing Program link on the GLC homepage. Each writing prompt has a code. For example, the code for the first expository prompt is E12A. Please record the proper code on your essay to identify the chosen prompt. The top corner of the essay should include the following information:

Student Name

Teacher (IST) Name

Date

Grade Level

Prompt Code

All submissions should be typed, double-spaced, in 12-point Times New Roman font.

Self-assessment

S11A: *Write a reflection on your writing.*

Consider the Portfolio that you completed in the spring. Carefully read over the Evaluator Narrative that you received back from the Writing Program. Keeping the evaluator's letter in mind, write a reflection of at least 500 words on your writing. Describe your writing process—the steps you go through from start to finish—to transform ideas into a polished final draft. Describe your strengths as a writer and explain how those strengths enable you to write effectively. Also describe your weaknesses as a writer, why these weaknesses exist, and what you can do to improve on them (avoid discussion of mechanical errors such as spelling and punctuation, focusing instead on global aspects of the essay such as creating an effective thesis or developing ideas). Describe your revision process, the methods you use when revising; either include an example of a situation in which revision contributed to making a more effective final draft, or speculate on how your revision process might improve. Lastly, describe what you do to avoid past problems or frustrations you have had with writing; address problems or frustrations such as getting started, procrastination, fulfilling an essay assignment, following through with a thesis, developing ideas, concluding, researching and avoiding plagiarism, or some other facet of writing that concerns you.

Expository (6 total)

E11A: *Write a composition describing your ideal place to live.* Choose a place you would like to live—large metropolis, medium-size city, small town, suburb, rural village, desert, mountains, forest, anywhere—that you think would contribute most to your overall happiness and well-being. Write a composition of at least 750 words in which you identify and describe the place you would like to

live and explain the reasons for your choice, making clear why that place would be better for you than where you presently reside—how might it meet your needs, goals, or aspirations as an adult? Consider aspects of that place such as environment, social-life, community, economics, politics, etc.

E11B: *Write a composition on the place or environment in which you grew up in relation to who you are today.* Describe the setting, providing sufficient details to allow readers to get a sense of that place. Explain how that place has or has not influenced who you are. Did it contribute to the values you presently have? Did it affect the ways you now experience space and place? Did it affect your understanding or your self or others in any way? Write a composition of at least 750 words in which you analyze the effects of the environment you grew up in on your present self.

E11C: *Write a plan for your personal future.* Think of what you will do once you gain a greater degree of independence. Write a composition of at least 750 words in which you reflect on what you have done in your past to prepare for your future, and describe what you plan to do, where you plan to go, and what you plan to achieve in the next five years. Use specific details in your discussion and explain your plans clearly.

E11D: *Write a composition that defines a word and discusses it in different contexts.* Pick a word that has different meanings depending on the different contexts it is used in. In an essay of at least 750 words, define what that word means according to a dictionary (denotation), and then discuss situations in which that word's meaning changes according to context (connotation). Describe the different contexts that affect the word's meaning, explaining what of those contexts causes or results in the change in meaning.

E11E: *Write a composition that analyzes a form of media.* Choose one of the following and then analyze it: a television show, a website, a newspaper, or a magazine. Focus on the entire content. Determine who the audience is for the media you have chosen. Describe who fits that demographic in terms of age, gender, race, and/or socio-economic class. Discuss the goal or intent of the specific media you have chosen, what it wants its audience to take away from it, to learn or understand. Consider what the media's bias is. Provide examples, specific references to the media to support your analysis. Write a composition of at least 750 words in which you first describe the media briefly but adequately enough that a person unfamiliar with that media would be able to follow your discussion and then, second, analyze the media, explaining who the audience for the media is, what its goal is, whether or not it effectively fulfills its goal, what the effects on audience are, and how you have arrived at these conclusions.

E11F: *Practice applying for a job.* Scan through the employment opportunities of the classified section of a local or nearby newspaper. Find an advertisement for a job that you are interested in. Analyze the advertisement to determine what

skills and education level are required (even if you do not possess either or both of these, that's ok—this is just practice). Then create a resume and draft a full-page letter of introduction and intent to accompany the resume as if you were actually applying for the job. Be sure both the resume and letter are formatted properly.

Narrative (4 total)

N11A: *Write a story about a character's struggle, set in a specific period of American history.* Choose a period of American history. Create characters, plot, and setting. Write a narrative of at least 1000 words that explores the struggle of a character or characters against oppressive conditions. Making clear early on in the essay what the historical period is, describe the struggle, how characters face or deal with it, and what the results are. Choose language that will express your voice and style as well as capture a sense of how language was used in the historical period. Use dialogue that will reveal your message and illustrate the main issues you are exploring. Develop secondary characters who will interact with the main character or characters to illustrate differences in how people respond to the situation or issues. Consider how the ending of your story will affect the message of your narrative.

Examples: Hester Prynne faced gender inequality in *The Scarlet Letter*. Scout experienced racism in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Or you could create your own character(s): 1) write about a poverty-stricken person during the Great Depression or during this decade; 2) write about an Asian American, Mexican American, or African American in the military during a time when their civil rights had been denied at home; 3) write about a recently displaced Native American trying to adjust to life on a reservation; 4) write about a person with a physical disability that makes everyday life difficult; or 5) if applicable, write about oppressive conditions you are experiencing or have experienced, allowing characters you create and place in a specific time in history to work through those conditions.

N11B: *Write a composition describing your personal experience of a particular work of literature.* Choose a novel, play, or short story that you have read while learning about literature this year that was important for you personally. Identifying early on the author and title of the work of literature, write a composition of at least 1000 words in which you explain what you learned from the work and its significance to you, using details from your personal experience. As a narration, your essay should be telling a story that relates your engagement with the work of literature. Use descriptive language to help your audience experience the impact the work had on you, and speculate on what lasting effect the work may have on you.

N11C: *Write a composition in which you imagine you are the author of a work of literature you have read this year.* In an essay of at least 1000 words, narrate the circumstances: explain who you are and what work you are in the process of writing. Describe the setting in which you are writing, and discuss the choices you are making as you are writing the work of literature—as the author, why did you choose those characters and that setting, why that conflict and its resolution,

and why that theme or message? What is it you hope readers understand or learn from the work of literature you as author are writing? In the end, reflect on what you see as the strengths and shortcomings of the final product that is the completed work of literature.

N11D: *Write an alternative conclusion to a short story.* Choose a story you are familiar with, and then reflect on its ending or conclusion. Write an alternative conclusion to that story, one that drastically changes its meaning. Then, write a narrative of about 700 words in which discuss the story in relation to its original conclusion and in relation to the conclusion you've created, explaining what you hoped to achieve in your alternative conclusion and why you crafted it as you did. Discuss how the story's meaning or theme changes as a result of the altered conclusion. Be sure to submit a copy of the story with its original conclusion, your alternative conclusion, and your narrative addressing the above.

Response to Literature (6 total)

[For any essay requiring that you read a long book, make sure you start reading the book about two months before the essay's due date. Also, remember that when you quote from a book you need to cite the page number for a quotation in text and document the book on a Works Cited page.]

L11A: *Write a composition analyzing the theme of American identity in two different pieces of literature.* Choose two pieces of literature that are concerned with the theme of how Americans identify themselves. Write a composition of at least 1500 words in which you analyze how each author portrays American identity; identify the values, beliefs, and ideals each author expresses; and contrast the two authors' portrayals and uses of literary devices and character development. In the end, be sure to explain what, according to each author, it means to be American.

Examples: Much of how Americans identify themselves has to do with how others "see" them and treat them, depending on assumptions about their race, ethnicity, gender, class, and body shape and size. In Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, for example, Janie's grandmother is a slave and sees herself as inferior to white people because other people have defined her as inferior. Because she is treated as inferior and lives in oppressive conditions, she believes it. What it means for Janie and her grandmother to be American sharply contrasts with what Benjamin Franklin describes in his autobiography. For Franklin, to be an American means freedom of mind, independence of body, and the opportunity to contemplate moral perfection. As African American women, Janie and her grandmother do not have the same privileges as Franklin.

L11B: *Write a composition that examines literary representations of your own culture, background, identity, or race or ethnicity.* In an essay of at least 1500 words, examine representations in one or more works of literature of your choice. Giving some attention to setting but mostly focusing on characters, explain whether, according to your experience, you find the representations accurate or not. Are the characters overly simplistic or complex? Are the characters' dreams, aspirations, and desires, as well as conflicts and problems, consistent

with how you understand your culture, background, identity, or race or ethnicity? What about their values, their notions of right and wrong? Explain what the author's purpose may be in creating these characters and whether they accurately represent your understanding of your own culture, background, identity, or race or ethnicity.

L11C: Write a composition comparing and contrasting representations of people from backgrounds different than yours in at least two works of literature. Choose two works of literature—one must be a novel, while the second may be a novel or a play. In an essay of at least 1500 words, describe the qualities, values, dreams, hopes, and aspirations attributed to the characters. Discuss the ways in which the attributes of the characters relate to the conflicts and resolutions of the works of literature. Discuss how these attributes relate to the theme or message of the works. Explain what you believe the authors of the works want readers to understand about these characters, and discuss whether the concerns of those characters are still relevant today.

Examples: Representations of Native Americans characters are found in *The Last of the Mohicans* as well as in the film *Smoke Signals*; *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, *Song of Solomon*, and *As I Lay Dying* provide representations of African Americans characters; while representations of white American characters appear in all of the books mentioned above, three plays that represent whiteness are *Death of a Salesman*, *The Glass Menagerie*, and *The Crucible*.

L11D: Write a composition analyzing the theme of “silence” in relation to female characters in one or more novels. Choose one or more novels in which female characters struggle with the issue of silence—whether their voices are dismissed by others or they choose to remain silent rather than face dismissal, criticism, or persecution. Write an essay of at least 1500 words in which you identify what the female character or characters are silent about, the causes for their silence, and what message the author is communicating with the theme of silence. Analyze how the author makes use of silence to communicate his or her message. Explain how the characters’ struggles with silence relate to contemporary women’s struggles.

Examples of works in which “silence” occurs: *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *The Crucible*, *The Scarlet Letter*, and *Song of Solomon*.

L11E: Write a composition analyzing the theme of “masculinity” concerning male characters in one or more novels. Choose one or more novels in which male characters struggle with masculinity—whether it is the expectation that they will be physically strong, brave, or financially successful, or whether they are struggling to be masculine in their own way. Write an essay of at least 1500 words in which you define what masculinity means in the works, identify the expectations of masculinity that the male character or characters face, describe how the characters struggle, and explain what message the author is communicating concerning masculinity. Analyze how the author uses masculinity to communicate his or her message. Explain the significance of the author’s message and how it applies to men in contemporary society.

Examples of works in which masculinity is depicted: *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, *The Red Badge of Courage*, *The Last of the Mohicans*, *As I Lay Dying*, and *Death of a Salesman*.

L11F: *Write a composition that examines language, diction, and metaphor in a work of literature of your choice.* In an essay of at least 1500 words, describe the language of the work, explaining why the author chose that particular language to tell the story. Pay close attention to word choice. Consider the ways that the story's various metaphors mean or make sense in relation to the whole. Examine the language of the general narrative—the various descriptions—as well as that of dialogue among characters. Explain whether the language is formal or informal, simple or complex, rough or delicate, literal or metaphoric, and also be attentive to any shifts among types of language. In the end, be sure to explain how the story's use of language contributes to its overall theme or message.

Persuasive (5 total)

P11A: *Write an essay persuading either a President or Congress to make a certain decision.* Choose a decision in history made by a President or the Congress of the United States that affected the lives or freedoms of a group or groups of people. Write a 1300 to 1600 word composition in which you imagine you are an advisor to the President or to Congress before that decision was made. Persuade the President or Congress one way or the other— either support the decision that was ultimately made, or convince the President or Congress to take a different course of action (or even inaction). Discuss the possible outcomes of any of the choices. Use strong, logical arguments based on information that would have been available at the time (but do not use the outcome of the actual event as a reason to support that action—it would not have been known at the time). Imagine or predict the way things may have come out differently if a different decision had been made.

Examples: President Van Buren ordered Cherokee Indians to march from Georgia to reservations west of the Mississippi; President Polk declared war on Mexico in order to expand U.S. territory; President Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation; President Franklin Roosevelt ordered citizens of Japanese descent into internment camps after the bombing of Pearl Harbor; President Truman ordered the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki; President Kennedy supported an invasion of Cuba; President Johnson used the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution to declare war on North Vietnam; President Reagan increased nuclear weapon development during the Cold War.

P11B: *Write a composition discussing the importance and effects of a specific environmental issue.* Choose an aspect of the Earth's environment that troubles you. Write a 1300 to 1600 word essay in which you describe the problem, discuss its severity, offer a solution or support a solution already available, and convince your audience both that the problem is important and that the audience should support the solution or solutions you offer.

Examples: Global warming, air pollution, water pollution, deforestation, animal extinction, depletion of energy resources, human over population.

P11C: *Write a composition that argues which type of school system is best for you.* (To respond to this prompt effectively, you should have experience in more than one type of school system; if not, it is recommended that you do not respond to this prompt.) If you have experience in more than one type of school system, write an essay that compares and contrasts at least two types of school systems, whether public, private, charter, or home-school. In an essay of 1300 to 1600 words, discuss the similarities and differences you witnessed and experienced between the two types of schooling while arguing which type of system is more appropriate for your educational needs. Describe advantages and disadvantages of the different educational settings, explaining which in your experience is more conducive to learning. Also discuss other advantages and disadvantages of both. Be sure to identify what type of school system is best for you, supporting your assertions with specific evidence and reasons from your experience.

P11D: *Write a composition that proposes a change in content or method of current educational curriculum.* In an essay of 1300 to 1600 words, describe a current aspect of curriculum—whether content or delivery—and then propose a change to it—again, whether content or delivery (“delivery” means how it is taught). Consider the curriculum of various school subjects—the information and knowledge—and the ways these are taught or delivered. Then choose one subject, discussing a specific aspect of the curriculum while proposing either a change in the content or the delivery of the curriculum. Be sure to support your proposal with sufficient evidence and persuasive reasons.

Examples: 1) Just as there are competing notions of curriculum, there are different types of learners—some learn best by reading, some by hearing, some by doing, and some by a combination of these. Could some aspects of curriculum be shaped and delivered differently to appeal to a wider range of learners? 2) Are there ways that a school subject could be made more useful to learners if applied to real-life situations?

P11E: *Write a persuasive letter to a former teacher proposing a change in the way he or she teaches.* In a letter of 1300 to 1600 words, re-introduce yourself to the former teacher, reminding him or her of the subject(s) he or she had taught you, and describe that teacher’s method of teaching. Discuss what was effective and/or ineffective about that teaching, and then propose to that teacher another way to teach the subject, one that you believe would be more effective for learners like you. Be sure to be detailed and specific, supporting your proposal with sufficient evidence and persuasive reasons. The letter should be formatted properly.

Revision (1 total)

V11A: *Revise an essay you have already submitted and have had assessed to make it as good as possible.* Choose any essay that you have already submitted to evaluators. Consider the comments and feedback. Read your own work

objectively and think of ways it could accomplish its goals more effectively. Get an idea of what you want to change, rearrange, remove from, or add to the essay to make it better. Then begin to work on the essay directly. To revise means to see anew, so as you revise think of new ways to rewrite the essay as well as to improve the strategies already in use. Spend extra time on this revision (revision is one of the most important of writing skills), following through with your ideas for improving the work. It is your essay, so it is up to you whether to accept or reject the evaluator's comments and suggestions; either way, attend also to aspects of the essay the evaluator has not commented on. Revision is not just a matter of following instructions: it is a matter of doing whatever is possible to make an essay more effective.

Along with the original essay (including rubrics with commentary) and the revised essay, submit also one full-page of journal-style writing in which you describe why you revised what you did (and maybe also why you did not revise some other parts) and what you intend to achieve through those changes.

Research (3 total)

[It is recommended that you begin research at least one month prior to the essay's due date. Also, remember that when you quote from a book you need to cite the page number for a quotation in text and document the book on a Works Cited page.]

R11A: *Write a research paper analyzing and exploring the relationship between a work of literature and its historical context.* Choose a work of literature in which a historical event or era is a significant part of the context. Fully research the time period or event. Write a research paper of at least 1500 words in which you analyze how the literature provides insight into the history upon which it is based, and identify the author's message and how it is expressed through what the author emphasizes concerning the historical event(s). Explain what commentary the author is making about that event. Be sure to document the sources used on a Works Cited page.

Examples: 1) *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman*, a fictional autobiography, provides a view of slavery in America; research the time period in order to present an informed discussion of the historical events reflected in the fiction as well as analyze the effect of the events on African Americans and white Americans. 2) Research legal rights denied people of color, specifically African Americans, in order to understand more fully Zora Neale Hurston's court scene in *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1930). 3) Research the effects of the Great Depression on working class people, which would provide insight into John Steinbeck's portrayal of this historical time period in *The Grapes of Wrath*. 4) Analyze the effect the Puritans had on the American psyche as reflected through history and as portrayed in *The Scarlet Letter* and in *The Crucible*. 5) Research the effects of war on soldiers in relation to how it is represented in *The Red Badge of Courage*.

R11B: *Write a research paper that compares and contrasts two texts from two different time periods.* Choose two pieces of literature written in two different time periods which deal with a similar issue or theme, then research that theme in its historical context. Write an essay of at least 1500 words in which you explore the issue or theme in different historical contexts, identify the ways in which the theme is treated differently, and explain the author's reasons for

representing the theme in the ways that he or she did. Account for why and how the authors treat the theme differently (without resorting to the obvious: because they were written in different times; instead, try to determine how or what the theme meant in the different times and thus what the authors are responding to, given the different contexts surrounding the theme in the different historical periods). Be sure to document the sources used on a Works Cited page. Examples: 1) Compare *Gulliver's Travels* with *Brave New World* and the authors' social commentaries, their critiques of British society. 2) Compare one of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* with one of Shakespeare's plays, picking a theme and comparing and contrasting the treatment of that theme in Medieval literature and in Renaissance literature.

R11C: *Write a research paper analyzing and exploring the relationship between a work of literature and its author.* Choose a work of literature that interests you, and then research its author's life, experience, and other writings. Read a biography or autobiography of the author. In an essay of at least 1500 words, try to determine why the author wrote the book you are examining and what of its setting, subject, characters, conflict, or resolution are related to the author's life experience or concerns. Explain why the author wrote the work as he or she did and what purpose the writing of that book served for the author, what he or she got out of it. Refer to specific events or experiences in the author's life and to specific passages or portions of the book to support your discussion. Be sure to document the sources used on a Works Cited page.