

Gorman Learning Center Writing Program Grade 12

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

S12A: *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)

E12A: *Write a composition explaining what you've chosen to do after graduation.*

Think about what you will do once you have completed 12th grade—attend college or university; enter the job market; balance higher education and employment; raise a family; travel; join the armed services, the Peace Corps, or another organization; do something else altogether different; or perhaps attempt

a combination of two or several of the above. Write a composition of at least 1000 words in which you explain your choice and why you made it, explaining clearly what you hope to gain from it. Describe your plans for making this choice into a reality.

E12B: *Write a composition sharing what you wish you had known in 9th grade.* Think about some of the things you know now which you wish you had known four years ago. Write a composition of at least 1000 words for someone beginning the 9th grade in which you share what you would have liked to have been told at that time concerning the high school experience. Give advice, words of wisdom, and share relevant details from your personal experience that you think will help someone else get through it successfully.

E12C: *Write a letter to a younger person you know who is struggling with school.* In at least 1000 words, give that person some practical advice, based on your experience, for improving his or her performance in school. Consider describing both successes and difficulties in your own experience that this person could learn from. Describe in detail specific actions this person can take to do better in school.

E12D: *Write a composition on the most and least useful things you learned in school.* In an essay of at least 1000 words, discuss the most useful things you learned through school, whether they concern educational subjects or something else. Also discuss the least useful things you learned in school. Make clear why these things have and have not been useful or important to you.

E12E: *Write a composition that describes your own company.* Imagine that you are the CEO or president of your own company. In an essay of at least 1000 words, name the company and its location, describe what it does (make a product? provide a service? etc.), discuss what your role is, discuss what other people (if there are any) involved with the company do, and describe what the goals of the company are, both short- and long-term. Make clear why this company is useful or necessary.

E12F: *Practice writing a statement of purpose to a college or university.* Most colleges and universities require, along with evidence of your educational record (such as transcripts and SAT scores), submission of a statement of purpose. A statement of purpose should explain why you want to pursue higher education, what your intended field of study or major is, why you desire to study that field, and why you want to study it at that college or university. In at least 1000 words, respond to the above in a statement of purpose to a specific college or university. Be sure to address the statement to the specific college or university you'd like to attend.

Narrative (6 total)

N12A: *Write a revisionist fairy tale.* Choose a fairy tale that follows the same themes and archetypes of most fairy tales—beautiful princess, handsome prince, evil sorceress, a quest, a “happily ever after” ending, etc. Write a revision of the fairy tale in at least 1000 words, in which the stereotypes are challenged or eliminated. Consider the message you wish to send to your audience. Use descriptive language and strong dialogue to bring your setting and characters to life. Make your point of view and response to the original fairy tale clear.
Example: The film *Shrek* is an example of a revisionist fairy tale—*Shrek* challenges many fairy tale stereotypes, most notably that of the handsome hero and useless pretty princess.

N12B: *Write a narrative about a conversation between you and a person of your choice.* Choose any person—from any time in history, from the past or present—and create a conversation with this person, describing in a narrative of at least 1000 words what you two talk about. Be sure to identify the person early on. Describe the setting, making it clear why you want to converse with this person in that particular setting, and narrate the conversation, making the dialogue sound as real as possible. Since you have the opportunity here to have a conversation with anyone about anything, consider taking the opportunity to converse on worthwhile, meaningful concerns and subjects.

N12C: *Write a narrative involving your family or friends concerning an issue important to you.* Set up the narrative as a screenplay or television show, including three Acts. (Each Act, then, will need to set up suspense and drive toward a conflict. Think of the way a television show is paced between commercials: in this case, two commercial breaks—the first Act introduces characters and the setting, hinting toward a potential conflict; the second Act spells out the conditions of the conflict, leads up to it, and then presents the conflict; and the third Act resolves, or perhaps in some cases cannot resolve, the conflict.) Let the conversations and actions of characters be the primary vehicle for expression, relying on stage directions as little as possible. The narrative should be at least 1000 words.

N12D: *Write a story about a phone conversation with the President of the United States.* Write a first-person narrative of at least 1000 words in which you receive a phone call from the President asking for your advice on an issue. Describe the setting, and then narrate the conversation, making clear both the President’s initial inquiry and the give-and-take of the conversation. Conclude with an explanation of why you told the President what you did and what you hope will be achieved.

N12E: *Write a narrative about a march on Washington, D.C., or a speech to Congress.* Choose an issue you care deeply about, and then reflect on the message you want to send to decision-makers. Then decide whether your message will be best heard through a protest march or a speech. In a narrative of at least 1000 words, describe your course of action. If a march, describe the goals and intent of the march, who is involved, what slogans, banners, and/or

posters you and your fellow activists would carry, and what the intended messages of these would be; if a march, consider also who your opposition would be and also what your response to that opposition would be. If a speech, describe the setting—what does it look like and feel like to be addressing Congress?—and write out the speech, clarifying the issue and what you want Congress to do about it. Whether you narrate a march or a speech, be sure to make clear specifically what it is that you want changed and why.

N12F: *Write a reflective narrative about your belief system.* In at least 1000 words, explain what you believe—and why—about life, the universe, or whatever is significant to you. Discuss the origins of your belief system and why you have adopted it. Narrate an experience in which your belief system helped you to make a difficult decision. Reflect on what you personally gain from your beliefs. Consider how your life might be different, for better or worse, without that belief system.

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.]

L12A: *Write a composition comparing two works of literature in any way.* Choose two pieces of writing that you have experienced while learning about literature this year, both of which share some common thread—in content, theme, style, genre, use of literary device, etc. Write an essay of at least 1500 words in which you focus on the common thread and explore and analyze the similarities and differences between the two pieces of literature. Be sure to make clear the importance of what you have identified as the common thread to the two works of literature.

L12B: *Write a composition that examines genre, form, and structure.* In an essay of at least 1500 words, discuss the genre, form, and structure of a work of literature of your choice. Define these terms, and then discuss them specifically in relation to the work of literature you have chosen. Explain why the author chose that particular genre, as opposed to other possibilities, to convey the work of literature's message. Explain why the author chose that form and structured the story that way to convey the message. Explain whether or not the message is more or less effectively conveyed by use of the particular genre, form, and structure.

Example: Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club* is a novel (genre), set up in four parts (form), and each part consists of several chapters (structure). The various chapters are not linear or chronological; rather, each chapter within the part refers back to and develops notions introduced in earlier chapters, creating a weaving effect. So to respond to this prompt using *The Joy Luck Club* several concepts could be addressed, including but not limited to—Would the story be more or less effective if it was expressed in a different genre (play, film, poem, etc.)? Would it be more or less effective if its form or structure were different in the novel genre or in another genre?

L12C: Write a composition that analyzes a form of discrimination in a novel of your choice. In an essay of at least 1500 words, describe the form of discrimination that appears in the novel—whether it involves ethnocentrism, racism, sexism, ageism; discrimination toward disability or body size; or discrimination in any other form. Describe the discriminatory actions and/or language, identifying the source(s) of it. Describe how those who discriminate feel about it as well as those who are discriminated against. Explain whether the discrimination results in oppression or repression. Discuss why the author chose to represent discrimination as he or she does, and interpret the author’s intent—to illuminate the issue, to motivate readers to take action, to change opinion, etc. Explain the significance of the author’s message then as well as now. Support all your claims with textual evidence.

L12D: Write a composition analyzing a novel’s treatment of the issue of African American oppression. Choose a novel concerning the oppression of African Americans, such as *Invisible Man*, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, *Black Boy*, *Confessions of Nat Turner*, or *Native Son*. Write an essay of at least 1500 words in which you identify the specific criticisms the author makes regarding the oppression of African Americans, the author’s messages about racism and white privilege, and the particular struggles the characters deal with. Analyze the author’s character development in the midst of oppressive conditions and identify ways the characters adhere to or challenge stereotypes. Interpret the author’s intent—to illuminate issues, to motivate readers to take action, to change opinion, etc. Explain the significance of the author’s message then as well as now. Support all your claims with textual evidence.

Example: In the introduction to *Native Son* (1940), “How ‘Bigger’ was Born,” Richard Wright explains that his book is a direct response to the political, social, and historical inequalities and injustices experienced by African Americans in the 1930s. His book is also a response to white brutality inflicted upon African Americans who challenged the Jim Crow Laws; these laws defined African Americans as inferior beings who could not sit next to whites, eat in “white restaurants,” use the same restrooms, live in desegregated neighborhoods, etc. Wright explains that the only African Americans he knew who resisted or questioned the segregation laws were “shot, hanged, maimed, lynched, and generally hounded until they were either dead or their spirits were broken” (xi).

L12E: Write a composition analyzing a novel’s treatment of gender relations. Choose a novel in which inequality between men and women is an important theme. Write an essay of at least 1500 words in which you describe the male and female gender roles in the novel you have chosen and identify the ways in which the characters struggle against those roles. Analyze the author’s treatment of gender issues to identify the author’s message about gender roles. Examples: *The Joy Luck Club*, *Jane Eyre*, *Madame Bovary*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Wuthering Heights*, *A Doll’s House*. It may be useful to consider the specific messages about gender roles in the context of marriage, in employment opportunities, in leisurely activities, or through the author’s treatment of gendered stereotypes.

L12F: Write a composition analyzing the treatment of the issues of science, power, and culture in literature. Write an essay of at least 1500 words in which

you compare the way the authors of *Frankenstein* and of *Brave New World* treat the themes of science, power, and culture. Identify the messages about these themes, what effects of science upon culture they portray, who they are saying controls or has power over science (who is the authority on telling “good” from “bad” science and on what scientists may or may not do), and what they are saying are the benefits, risks, or likely outcomes of science. Analyze how these portrayals and messages about science apply to modern times and what contemporary readers may learn about science, power, and culture from reading these books.

Persuasive (7 total)

P12A: *Write an essay in which you persuade your audience to join a particular political party. Choose or invent a political party. Write a persuasive composition of at least 1000 words in which you argue that your political party is the best choice. Give logical and thoughtful reasons why one should align oneself with your party. As you write, remember that your audience may be a member of one of several various political parties: Republican, Democrat, Libertarian, Socialist, Green Party, etc. Persuade your audience that the values and agenda of your party make it the proper choice for them. Discuss in detail at least one important item on your party’s agenda and its position on it.*

P12B: *Write an essay in which you critique your preferred political party's platform or position on one or two specific issues.* Identify the party, and describe the issue(s) and your party's position(s). Explain where you disagree with the party, and propose how you prefer that the party would treat the issue, what position you believe it should take. In an essay of at least 1000 words, persuade your party to change its position(s) concerning one or two issues, using language that respects your party's values and beliefs but that also appeals to those values and beliefs to sway members of the party to adopt your views. Anticipate the party's responses to your position, explaining why those responses are not as valid as yours.

P12C: *Write a letter to an editor of a local or national newspaper that persuades readers to support a reform.* Choose an aspect of your community that you would like to see changed. Write a letter of at least 1000 words to the editor of a newspaper in which you explain the problem, persuade your audience that something should be done, describe the best solution or solutions, and explain what steps your audience should take. Use language that appeals to the audience's needs and values, and anticipate its responses. Use correct letter format.

Examples: An environmental issue; a community issue such as noise pollution or traffic gridlock; a social issue like homelessness or health care; or a political issue like appropriate uses of taxation or of the National Guard.

P12D: *Write a persuasive essay in which you argue to change or maintain the U.S.'s current laws that apply to 18-year-olds.* In at least 1000 words, write a persuasive essay in which you identify one or more current law affecting 18-year-olds that you believe should be changed or maintained as is. Explain why you believe the law is faulty or justified, providing sufficient evidence and good reasons to support your position. Use language that appeals to your opposition's values and needs, and anticipate that opposition's objections to your proposal.

P12E: *Write a proposal for a school course.* What subjects are not taught but you believe should be? Or, what subjects are taught but you believe could be better and more effectively designed? In at least 1000 words, identify a course that you believe should be taught or could be better taught, and then propose that the course be adopted as you describe it. Explain the information and knowledge that should be part of that course, how that information and knowledge should be taught, and what processes and activities should be used both to teach the course and to assess student learning. Persuade readers why the course should be adopted, what students will learn from it, why it is important that students learn this material, and what longer, larger long-term effects may result from incorporating this course into school curriculum.

P12F: *Design a prompt and argue that it should be adopted here.* Design and write out a prompt that you believe should be included here for future Gorman Learning Center students to respond to. Choose a grade level (either 9th, 10th, 11th, or 12th) and a mode (either exposition, narrative, response to literature,

persuasive, or research). Craft a prompt, in a format similar to the prompts that appear here. Then, using between 800 to 1000 words, argue why that prompt should be adopted and included here. Explain the educational value of the prompt, describing what it will teach students. Identify the skills it will require students to use and hone. Describe what it offers students that present prompts do not. Be sure to submit both the prompt and argument for its adoption.

P12G: *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; it may be a job that you would like in the future but are not yet qualified to apply for. 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. The letter should be persuasive, outlining your qualifications for the job while appealing to the values and needs of the company you are applying to. Be sure both the resume and letter are formatted properly.

Revision (1 total)

V12A: *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 (6 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.]

R12A: *Write a research paper analyzing the assertion of power of one of the three branches of American government at one point in history.* Choose one of the three branches of American government—executive, legislative, judicial—and a particular historical period in which one of the three branches asserted power. Write a research paper of at least 1500 words in which you describe how the government branch asserted its authority and discuss its effect on the other two branches, both then and in the long term. Be sure to document the sources used on a Works Cited page.

Examples: The Supreme Court has, at various times in history, made rulings that have affected the nation in a dramatic fashion: *Roe v. Wade*, *Brown v. the Board of Education*, etc. To explore either of these, research the Court cases and present the outcomes of the rulings as well as the effects on Congress and on the President's policies in the wake of the rulings. Or, at times a President has usurped the Congress's authority to declare war; research an instance in which this was done and the effects on the Congress's authority. Or, at times Congress has refused to pass a President's legislation; research an instance in which this occurred, explaining the significance of such legislative challenges to executive power.

R12B: *Write a research paper analyzing the role of the Supreme Court in U.S. history.* Write a research paper of at least 1500 words in which you discuss why the Supreme Court was founded, what its role has been historically in the U.S., and how, if at all, that role has changed over time. Discuss a few of the more prominent judges throughout the Court's history and why they have been important. Describe a few of the more important cases the Court has presided over and why these have been important. Discuss the effects the Court has had on the other prominent branches of government—executive and legislative—as well as on the public. Lastly, describe what you believe should be the Court's role today and whether your belief is consistent with the original intentions of the founding of the Supreme Court. Be sure to document the sources used on a Works Cited page.

R12C: *Write a research paper exploring the beginning of American democracy and how America has or has not lived up to its founding principles.* Research the reasons and goals of the founders of American democracy as they wrote the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights. Write a research paper of at least 1500 words in which you identify what the framers and writers of these documents intended to accomplish, what they wished to protect, what they were most concerned with, and what they most feared. Then explain whether America has kept to the original ideas behind these documents, whether the society or government has taken a different direction than the original intents of its founders, and if so whether you believe these changes have been for better or worse. Be sure to document the sources used on a Works Cited page.

Examples: There have been times in American history when citizens have been denied the rights expressed in those founding documents. You might identify the justifications which were provided and explain whether the reasons were or were not in line with what the founders had in mind. You might use contemporary governmental decisions to speculate on whether something similar may reoccur or on the conditions under which such may reoccur.

R12D: *Write a research paper in which you explore the relationship between capitalism and democracy.* Write a research paper of at least 1500 words in which you explain the differences between capitalism and democracy, illustrate the powers held by corporations and capitalist institutions in the United States, and discuss any conflicts between the rules of capitalism and the premises of democracy. Describe a current event or two as an example to examine ways that capitalism and democracy may or may not contradict each other. Be sure to document the sources used on a Works Cited page.

R12E: *Write a research paper examining propaganda in current media.* Write a research paper of at least 1500 words that defines propaganda, and then analyze the content of a media of your choice to determine whether or not that media is disseminating propaganda. Analyze how the media disseminates its content as well as the content itself. Determine whose interest the propaganda serves should it be the case that the media you examine is indeed engaging in the dissemination of propaganda. Should it be the case that the media you examine is not disseminating propaganda, then explain what makes that media's content or means of dispense not propagandistic. Discuss why a media would resort to propaganda and reflect on the effects of propaganda on both the dispensers and the receivers of it. Be sure to document the sources used on a Works Cited page.

R12F: *Write a research paper comparing Joseph Conrad's message in Heart of Darkness to other perspectives on colonialism.* Research the motives, reasons, and effects of colonialism, writings which uphold the popular belief that colonialism is harmless or helpful to the conquered people, writings which criticize colonialism, and writings which express a viewpoint somewhere between the extremes. Write a research paper of at least 1500 words in which you define colonialism and compare and contrast the perspectives you have discovered in your research with the view expressed by Joseph Conrad in *Heart of Darkness*. Explain how these perspectives, Conrad's included, are relevant (or not) to colonialism in other historical situations than those to which they are responding. Be sure to document the sources used on a Works Cited page.