

Gorman Learning Center Writing Program Grade 9

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 Writing

S9A: *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 Writing (5 total)

E9A: *Write an instructive composition, focusing on clarity of explanation.* Choose an activity that you enjoy or about which you have knowledge. Write an essay of at least 750 words in which you teach your reader, step by step, how to perform or engage in the activity you have chosen. Emphasize why it is important to perform the activity just as you describe it, explaining what the consequences

may be if one doesn't follow your directions exactly. Describe not only how to do the activity but also what is enjoyable or interesting about it. Choose language that expresses your unique voice and conveys your emotions or attitudes about the activity.

E9B: *Write an instructive composition, focusing on explaining to a particular audience.* Write a composition that explains how to do a task to someone unfamiliar with that task. Pick an activity that you know how to do but someone you know doesn't. In at least 750 words, write a letter to that person in which you describe in detail how to do the activity, choosing the type of language and level of expression appropriate to that person, whether he or she be 9 or 99 years old. Make the explanation clear, defining terms when necessary, and explain why it is important to follow the steps just as you describe them. (Note that where prompt E9A, above, requires you to focus on developing the expressivity of your voice and language use, this prompt requires you to focus on using and shaping voice and language to meet the needs of a specific audience.) Be sure to use proper letter format.

E9C: *Write a composition about your favorite school subject.* In an essay of at least 750 words, explain what your favorite school subject is and why. Provide enough detail to make the subject familiar to those who may not have your appreciation for it. Explain why this subject has value to you. Also, explain what you gain from studying this subject and what you hope to do with this knowledge in the future, whether it be study it further at a college or university, pursue a career in the field, apply the knowledge to a hobby, or use it to make a contribution to your community. Be sure to explain what the subject is, why you find it valuable, and what you will do with this knowledge in the future.

E9D: *Write an essay about the kind of work you would like to do.* Decide what kind of work you would like to do—whether part-time, full-time, or as a long-term career—and what kind of work, if any, you would definitely not want to do. Write an essay of at least 750 words in which you explain why you have chosen this work, what skills and experiences you hope to gain from a future job, how you imagine these will help you in the future, and what difficulties you foresee in balancing your time between work and other demands such as education, friends, and family.

E9E: *Write a composition that summarizes a work of literature.* Choose one book, and then in an essay of at least 750 words summarize its plot, also describing setting, point of view, significant characters, major symbols, tone, the book's theme, or any other important aspects of the book that should be included in a complete summary. (Recall that a summary merely relates *what* happens in a book, whereas analysis is to account for *why* and *how* what happens happens. This prompt requires you to complete a summary only.)

Narrative (4 total)

N9A: *Write a composition that reflects on being a child.* In at least 750 words, write an essay in which you pick an age from your childhood and describe what it was like for you being that age. Describe the setting as you remember it, and reflect on your abilities then. Describe the activities you engaged in as well as what you were able and unable to do. What did you desire to do then but could not? Additionally, reflect on and describe the advantages and disadvantages of being that age and being your age now.

N9B: *Write a composition that reflects on a day in a classroom or other educational environment.* In an essay of at least 750 words, describe the setting and describe what occurred in a typical day in that setting. Then reflect on what you learned in that setting other than “subjects” like mathematics, language arts, sciences, etc. Reflect on what lessons about life were taught explicitly or implicitly, and what behaviors and attitudes were and were not tolerated or promoted. Discuss what you learned, among other factors, about socializing, time, work, and/or public, shared space.

N9C: *Write a narrative reflection about a particular friend.* Choose a person who is not a member of your immediate family with whom you share a unique relationship. Write a narrative piece of at least 750 words in which you describe the person in great detail so that readers are able to visualize him or her as well as understand some important aspects of his or her personality. Explain the origins of the relationship you have with the person and the special bond the two of you have developed. Provide specific examples that reveal the significance of the friendship. Reflect on the significance of the friendship to your personal development, leading to the present.

N9D: *Write a reflective narrative about a turning point in your life.* Choose an event or moment in your life that was significant to you. Write a narrative piece of at least 750 words in which you explain what occurred and why it was significant. As you write about this experience, choose language, details, and tone that will recreate what your feelings were at the time and make it clear to the reader what the turning point was like and has meant for you. Reflect on what that turning point means to you now, what you have learned from it, how it has influenced your life, and how it has influenced any of your decisions since then

Response to Literature (5 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.]

L9A: *Write an analysis of the similarities and differences between two pieces of literature.* Choose two pieces that you have read this year while learning about

literature. Write an essay of at least 1000 words in which you analyze how the themes in these two selections are similar or different, comparing and contrasting them. Explain what the themes are early in the essay, and quote from the texts to explain how they are expressed. Explain the significance of the connections you make between the two pieces.

L9B: Write a composition on one of the following themes: friendship, love, betrayal, or redemption. Choose two works of literature that contain and articulate one of the above themes. Write a composition of at least 1000 words comparing the different authors' treatments of the theme. Analyze how at least one of the following conveys messages about the theme: characters, use of settings, use of literary devices, or diction, tone, and mood. Explain the significance of the theme in relation to at least one of the items above. Reflect on the works' significance to a modern teenage audience.

Examples: One of the major works read by most 9th graders is Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. A novel from the suggested reading list, *Of Mice and Men*, evokes these themes as well, but in a very different time and with very different characters.

L9C: Write a composition comparing two treatments of the relationship between governing powers and governed people. Choose two from the following list of novels: *Animal Farm*, *Fahrenheit 451*, *Lord of the Flies*, *Catcher in the Rye*, or *Ishi, the Last of his Tribe*. Write a composition of at least 1000 words in which you compare the different authors' messages about the power of the governing body, those whom it governs, and the conflict between conformity and rebellion against a governing or ruling body. As you analyze the authors' messages about this theme, analyze also how the authors convey these messages. Explain the significance of at least one literary device in relation to the theme.

L9D: Analyze the theme of work or labor in a novel. Choose a novel which is concerned with work or labor, such as *Of Mice and Men* or *Animal Farm*. Then choose one of the following literary devices: character, setting, word choice, or symbolism. Write an essay of at least 1000 words in which you identify the author's message about working people in the novel and analyze how the literary device you have chosen helps express that message. Explain how the device is significant to the message.

L9E: Write a composition that explores the function of setting. Choose two works of literature, and then examine the setting of each. In an essay of at least 1000 words, describe the physical settings, the locations, the time periods, and the social contexts. Examine the settings in detail, explaining the significance of the particular settings to the themes or overall messages of the books. Discuss the ways the particular settings contribute to the themes.

Persuasive (3 total)

P9A: *Write a persuasive composition to your parents.* Choose a decision your parents have made for you that you would like to see them change. Write a persuasive argument of at least 750 words to convince your parents to allow you to make a choice different than theirs. Choose your language with your audience in mind, develop logical connections, and express your views. Use a tone and language that respects your parents while anticipating their objections to your position. Format the essay as a letter.

Examples: You may wish to stop or start eating meat or see with friends a movie that your parents have decided against.

P9B: *Write a letter to persuade a person to change a certain behavior.* Choose something that one of your friends or family members does that bothers or troubles you. Write that person a letter of at least 750 words explaining why the behavior or choice bothers you. Express your perspective fully, and choose argumentative strategies with the target audience in mind. Use a tone and language that respects the person while anticipating his or her objections to your position. Use correct letter format.

P9C: *Write a composition to persuade a person to read a certain piece of literature.* Choose a short story, poem, play, or essay that you have read this year while learning about literature. Write a persuasive letter of at least 750 words to a friend in which you present a convincing argument to that friend about why she or he should read the piece (be sure to identify the author and title of the piece early on in your essay). Choose reasoning that will be most effective and that will appeal to the friend's values, biases, and/or needs. Refer to specific parts of the piece—you should use quotations—to support your explanations of why it is important for your friend to read it.

Revision (1 total)

V9A: *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 (2 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.]

R9A: *Write a research paper that assesses your present preparedness for college or a university.* Research the entrance requirements of one or more specific colleges or universities. Determine what the application process entails, what must be submitted to gain entrance. Figure out why you want to attend the specific school(s), what you intend to major in, and what your minor might be. Along the way, reflect on what you will need to do specifically in the meantime to gain admittance to the school(s)—for example, do your present writing skills need improvement for you to be able to write successfully in a college/university setting? Is your GPA adequate? Are you prepared to take and pass SATs? What attitudes or values does an institution stress are necessary to succeed in higher education? Present the information you have gathered and learned in a research paper of at least 1500 words, following proper research paper format and manuscript requirements (be sure to include a Works Cited page documenting sources consulted).

R9B: *Write a research paper comparing and contrasting two career choices that you are interested in.* Research the job descriptions, requirements, and background necessary to obtain a position in those fields, including specialized training or university education, if applicable. Investigate some companies who employ people to do those jobs, and find out what their qualifications for hiring are. Reflect on which career choice is most appealing to you after exploring the information gathered in your research. Present the information you have gathered and learned in a research paper of at least 1500 words, following proper research paper format and manuscript requirements (be sure to include a Works Cited page documenting sources consulted).

Examples: You may have an interest in computers, but you are not sure what employment opportunities are available in the computer field. Two possible careers, of many, within the computer field are web designer and programmer. Or you may have an interest in being a doctor, but you're not sure whether you'd prefer to be a pediatrician, a podiatrist, a heart surgeon, or a veterinarian.