

6/12/19

Since submitting our Anne Frank Portfolio projects, we've been working on poetry. Tomorrow students will present their mimicry projects, which was modeled in class today.

Students have also been preparing for the final. Readings have been issued in class and a summary of what will be on the final has been posted on the Documents page of this website.

Homework: Finish you mimicry project and study for the final.

5/24/19

Yesterday I checked in first drafts for each student (I was pulled from period 6, so those students should have shared their drafts with me. If you haven't, then do, please). I've also uploaded a few helpful documents to the Documents page of this website. Please use these docs as you revise (Revision Checklist), create your Table of Contents (Template), cite your sources using parenthetical citations, and create your Works Cited page (Works Cited Resource Sheet).

Over the weekend students should finish their first drafts if they have not yet done so. After having completed this draft, students should print it out and use the Revision Checklist to guide their revision process (remember -- this checklist has a backside that must be addressed as well). Handwritten revision marks covering all required formal essay elements must be addressed on this draft in your handwriting on a printed-out copy of your first draft. No final drafts will be accepted without a draft (1st or 2nd) with handwritten revision marks, illustrating adherence to our writing process and the formal essay elements.

Some students need to address past work, while others are ready to move forward. If you are ready to move forward, begin to fix your current draft using your handwritten marks. Begin adding in parenthetical citations and begin constructing your Works Cited page (see the issued handout). Keep working on your Glossary of Terminologies and Vocabulary, making sure to use these words that reflect your new learning in your essay.

I have also uploaded a document that contains links to potential present-day resources and topics. Feel free to use these links as a starting point for this research.

Keep writing! Next week we'll look at some copies of complete projects, so students understand what it'll all look like in the end. Only about 3 school days left to work on this project, so your efforts at home are going to make all the difference.

5/17/19

After another week in the computer lab, students should be well on their way into drafting their essays. Keep writing over the weekend and continue to keep up with about a half an hour of writing or research every night.

Homework: As posted on the due date calendar on the portfolio project page, complete first drafts (intro, minimum of three body paragraphs and conclusion) due Thursday 5/23.

5/12/19

As students have been provided a calendar of due dates on the Portfolio Project page, there have been no updates on this page, but as we move from research to writing, I thought a few updates would be helpful.

On Friday we moved into the computer lab where students were presented with a graphic organizer on which they should organize their essay's evidence and argument in support

of their thesis statement. I began the process of checking thesis statements on Friday and will continue through next week. The expectations for this task and all others can be found on the project page of this website.

As students begin to organize their evidence and argument in support of their thesis, they should be searching for present-day sources that illustrate their thesis statement's relevancy to today and other points in history. Please, discuss the issues reflected in your thesis with parents and peers. Writing is much easier if you've talked through these ideas prior to putting them on paper.

Homework:

-Craft a thesis statement, making sure it is framed as a solution to the problem inherent in your essential question. Make sure the language in your thesis is very specific. Broad generalizations are very difficult (or impossible) to prove.

-Organize your essay paragraph by paragraph. If the organizer you were provided is insufficient, feel free to use whatever organizer suits your writing style, but all students must put together a plan before they begin writing their paragraphs.

-Continue to search for present-day sources that illustrate the timelessness of the issues addressed in your thesis.

-Refer to the Anne Frank Portfolio Project page of this website for clarification all aspects of this project. If you have any questions after having done so, please, email me and I will be happy to clarify.

4/29/19

Today while we continued to read The Diary of Anne Frank in class, I checked in with students on their research progress, looking for two annotated text-based primary sources, one annotated primary source artifact (a visual item like a photo or poster) and two annotated secondary sources.

Homework: Prepare for research Source Check #2 on Wed. 5/8. That day you'll be required to have 5 (or more) annotated text-based primary sources, 5 (or more) annotated secondary sources, and two (or more) annotated artifacts. You should also be close to an answer to your EQ, as a working thesis is due on Friday 5/10.

4/26/19

This week in English class, students have been reading the play version of *The Diary of Anne Frank*. Outside of class, students have been working on choosing their Essential Question and have started their research for their Portfolio Project. Students were issued a manila folder containing multiple handouts. Of particular interest is the Anne Frank Unit Calendar that outlines significant due dates, the first of which is fast-approaching on Monday:

Homework: Essential Question Selection and Source Check #1: Monday, April 29th. Students should have filled out their Essential Question handout and should have annotated, printed-out hard copies of 2 primary sources, 2 secondary sources, and 1 artifact relevant to their EQ. Students should have five analysis sheets completed (one for each source).

Parents: If your student seems to be behind already or wants to get ahead, I would encourage them to join me after school on Monday.

4/24/19

Today we began reading *The Diary of Anne Frank*, a drama (play) based on her diary, *The Diary of a Young Girl*. We'll be reading this aloud in class over the course of the next two weeks. Students' job outside of class is to determine which essential question they would like to answer through their research and then begin that research. Students should plan on allotting about 30 minutes per day to this research. If you skip a day -- no worries -- just double your work the next day. The most important thing is that you are keeping up.

We also graded our Holocaust Web quiz and passed out Analysis Sheets that will be used to process information relevant to answering your EQ. We also passed out a Research Log on which students will record the sources they have collected.

So, get started researching! You only have 4 or 5 nights to prepare for your first due date on Monday 4/29.

-For this check in, students should have decided on their essential question and begun to research, searching their sources for understandings that will lead them to an answer to this EQ. You'll be required to have printed out and annotated 2 primary source docs, two secondary source docs, and one artifact along with an Analysis Sheet for each.

4/22/19

Today we took a quiz assessing students' active reading notes, covering the first 34 pages of Anne Frank's diary. After that we began to introduce the Anne Frank Portfolio Project.

Homework: Read over the Anne Frank Portfolio Project page on this website and summarize the requirements and key elements of the project, writing it all out on a full single-spaced page. Use bullet points, numbers and headings to lay out the project in an organized manner. When you come in to class tomorrow, you should be able to use this homework to report to the class what needs to be done to properly complete this project. After filling a page summarizing the project, write out 3 questions you still have about this project.

4/11/19

Today students were presented with the first 34 pages of The Diary of a Young Girl, by Anne Frank and were given examples and instructions as to the the expectations for active reading. After that we went over the answers to the 11 Holocaust Web Questions.

Homework:

-Study for tomorrow's quiz using your answers and your notes taken in class.

-Actively read the 1st 34 pages (the whole packet I gave you) of The Diary of a Young Girl by Anne Frank, writing notes on each page, noting key details, summarizing sections, clarifying unknown vocabulary, looking up historical references. . . A quiz over your reading notes will be given the day we get back from break. Strong detailed notes = good quiz score. The quiz will be open-note and is designed to measure the quality of your notes, not your ability to read the text on the day of the quiz.

4/8/19

We have begun our unit on The Diary of Anne Frank and the Holocaust. Students will be in the computer lab for the first half of the week answering a series of question on the historical context for this unit. Here's a link to the webpage that connects you with the readings: [The Holocaust: A Learning Site For Students](#)

Homework:

-Make sure your 11 questions are answered and written out by Thursday.

-Watch this video before class on Thursday (I recommend you watch the video as soon as possible, as it is very helpful at tying together the ideas and information addressed in the questions. [The Path to Nazi Genocide Video Link](#)

WARNING: Between minutes 29:30 and 30:10 there is film depicting an execution of civilians by SS troops. It is old, grainy film, taken at a distance, but it is intense. Please, avoid this part of the video if you feel this imagery is not appropriate for you. Also, starting at minute 34:30 there begins a series of images taken by the Allied military forces who liberated the Nazi death camps. These images are also intense, depicting the tragic consequences of starvation and malicious neglect; however, these images are not violent.

4/1/19

Today we continued our MCAS prep training, reading "The Drummer Boy of Shiloh" (p. 55) and "Echoes of Shiloh" (p. 61) from our textbook. Students must answer the 6 questions on page 61 and then respond in a one-page essay to the following prompt:

-Why does Bradbury and Foote use sensory imagery in their writings on Shiloh? What does it add to their work? Use specific examples from both texts to support your response.

In class today most students finished the questions. If you didn't finish the questions, finish them for homework. We'll complete the essay response in our next class, and we'll check in all of the recent MCAS-prep homework and classwork from the last week or so.

3/29/19

Today we read two poems and wrote an MCAS-style response in class focusing on two poems. If you didn't complete the one-page essay response, complete it for our next class.

3/26/19

Today students were issued a reading on "undersigned fugitive," Basil Dorsey. After reviewing the elements of narrative writing, students were provided a writing prompt and were assigned to write a narrative response based on the MCAS-style prompt issued to them.

Homework: Finish your narrative told from the perspective of Basil Dorsey, following the instructions provided on the handout.

3/25/19

Today we finished up our close reading of the primary source document referred to as "To the Citizens of Northampton," and we began reading a short piece of secondary nonfiction focused on the life of "undersigned fugitive" Basil Dorsey.

Homework: Read the Basil Dorsey bio and the prompt below, and then bullet-point 10 details from "To the Citizens. . ." and 10 details "Basil Dorsey that will help you to respond to the prompt during our in-class writing activity. The Basil Dorsey reading and prompt can be found on the Documents page of this website.

3/22/19

Having taken our diagramming and grammar test yesterday, we have moved forward with a short mini-unit on primary source documents. Today we began reading one particular document published in the Northampton Courier in 1850. Using primary source reading strategies, we read over this document, working to determine the authors' purpose. To answer some of the questions students had in regards to the document, we watched two short videos in class. Please, refer to those videos as you work on the questions.

Homework: Answer the Guided Reading Questions on a separate sheet of paper for our next class.

3/18/19

Last Thursday students took their diagramming quiz, and today they received it back, and we discussed the right (and wrong) way to diagram those three sentences.

Homework:

-Continue working on englishgrammar101.com every night. ALL activities are to be completed by Wednesday of this week for full credit.

-Prepare for Thursday's test. Each student will be allowed to bring a "cheat sheet" to class for the test. That "cheat sheet" can include anything, as long as it fits on one side of one 8.5x11" piece of paper. No other papers will be allowed to be used while taking Thursday's test. The quality of your "cheat sheet" entirely depends on your efforts to prepare for this assessment.

3/13/19

All week we've been diagramming sentences, and many student have been having their "ah-ha!" moments where things are starting to make sense. This happens when students have put in time training on englishgrammar101.com, following the Step-by-Step, and using resources, like previously completed diagrams.

Homework: Study for tomorrow's diagramming quiz. You will be given one declarative, interrogative and imperative sentence which you will have to diagram. This is a 30-point quiz, and you may use any notes or documents you wish to use. Students will be limited to a single notecard on next week's test, though. Good luck! and don't forget to use the resources on this website's Links page to help with your quiz preparation.

3/8/19

Today we continued to express our understanding of the 8 parts of speech and grammar through sentence diagrams.

Heads-up: On Monday, students who scored below an 80% on their 8 parts of speech quiz will have a chance to retake the quiz.

Heads-up: We'll have a quiz over everything covered so far this unit on Thursday of this week. Use the resources on the Links page to help you prepare.

3/6/19

Today we graded our 8 parts of speech quiz. Students earning an 18/22 or above will not have to retake the quiz, but all students scoring below that should be ready for a chance to retake it on Monday the 11th in class. This quiz will have a 10% point deduction for the final score, so to get a respectable grade, students are going to have to aim high.

Homework: Continue englishgrammar101.com activities, and those needing to retake the quiz should begin preparing for that.

3/5/19

Today we continued to work on diagramming the 8 parts of speech.

Homework: Continue to complete englishgrammar101.com lessons, activities and quizzes. All are due 3/20, so keep up a steady pace! If you haven't started, you are behind and time is going to be very tight in the near future.

3/1/19

Today students worked in small groups, discussing the Diagramming Sensory Verbs handout. Groups presented diagrams, talking their way through the process as they displayed their diagrams to the class.

Homework: Continue working on the englishgrammar101.com activities and lessons.

2/28/19

Today students signed up for their englishgrammar101.com accounts. This is an online grammar program that lessons and exercises for students to learn, review and practice

2/27/29

Today we took our 8 Parts of Speech quiz and continued to introduce and practice new elements of grammar and diagramming.

Homework: Finish the Sentence Types worksheet and do the first five diagrams on the Sensory Verbs diagramming handout for next class.

2/15&25/19

Today student were introduced to our grammar unit via a sentence diagramming tutorial, which can be linked to via my Links page.

Homework: Prepare for Wednesday's 8 parts of speech quiz. The quiz will not be matching or anything where the definitions are there for you. You must commit these definitions and all of their individual components to memory. There will be no partial credit.

2/14/19

Today (and tomorrow for period 5) we finally wrapped up our Mid-Year tests, and we began moving on to our next unit by taking a pretest over the 8 parts of speech and sentence diagramming.

Homework: Create flashcards in preparation for a quiz over the definitions of the 8 parts of speech on the Wednesday after we return from break (2/27). That means that you'll have to do some flashcarding/Quizletting while you relax next week!

You will have to memorize the information below, so begin training yourself now!

8 Parts of Speech:

Defined _____

Noun: a word that represents a person, place, thing or idea

Pronoun: a word that takes the place of a noun

Adjective: a word that modifies a noun or pronoun,

-Answers: Which one? What kind? How much? How many?

Verb: word(s) expressing an action or a state of being

-**Action** verbs represent actions

-**Linking** verbs connect the sentence's subject with an adjective or noun in predicate.

-**Helping** verbs work with a main verb to create a verb phrase.

Adverb: a word that modifies a verb, adjective or adverb

-Answers How? Where? When? To what extent/why?

Preposition: word(s) that expresses a relationship between words

-Always exists in a phrase, starting with the preposition and ending with its object

Conjunction: word(s) used to connect words, phrases and clauses

Interjection: words that express emotion or draw attention

-Never grammatically connected to other words in the sentence

2/8/19

Today we are taking the first half of the ELA mid-year test, covering literary element definitions and identification.

On Monday students will take the second half of the test, covering formal essay writing.

Homework: Continue to prepare for Monday's test. Please bring your study artifacts to class. You will submit these with your test. If you have made a Quizlet, please email me the link.

2/4-6/19

This week we will look at sample questions covering each section of the test. This will allow you to see exactly how the test is set up and exactly what skills and understandings will be assessed.

2/1/19

Today students were issued 4 Short Story Review Sheets. Each one allows students to note the key elements of each short story (minus "DTW and G-E" because we just did this stuff this week).

Homework: Continue to work on your SS Review Sheets and your other midterm review artifacts in preparation for the midterm next Thurs and Friday.

1/31/19

Today we continued our discussion of "DTW and G-E," focusing on the story's climax as a means to understanding the story's theme. We also looked at how other literary elements were used by Bradbury to support the development of this theme.

Homework: Students should begin to create their midterm review artifacts (flashcards, Quizlets, review sheets expressing information and concepts from our many handouts on the subjects covered on the midterm handout. I'll check in students' progress on these artifacts on Monday, and artifacts will be submitted with the midterms next week.

-ELA midterm 2/7 and 2/8.

1/29/19

Today students took their vocabulary quiz for "DTW and G-E" and had time to work on their Examples and Rationale worksheet. Students were also issued the review sheet for the upcoming Short Story, Literary Elements and Essay Elements Mid-term test, which will take place on 2/7 and 8.

Homework: Have your Examples and Rationale worksheet completed and ready to share in class tomorrow.

1/25&28/19

Today we finished the story and began working on a worksheet focused on explaining how the author uses literary elements in this story.

Homework:

-Prepare for the "DTW & G-E" vocabulary test on Tuesday.

-Finish the Examples and Rationale worksheet for Wednesday.

1/23&24/19

Today I checked in the first 10 literary elements from page one, and we read most of "DTW & G-E" in class.

Homework: Finish the other 10 literary elements for the worksheet.

1/22&23/19

Today we finished going over our new vocabulary list and reviewed a list of 20 literary devices used on the 1st page of our next short story.

Homework: Identify examples and prove the presences of the literary devices used on page one of "Dark They Were and Golden-Eyed." Do the first ten terms for homework, and we'll do the remaining ten in class tomorrow.

1/17/19

Today students received the vocabulary list for our unit's final short story, "Dark They Were and Golden-Eyed" by Ray Bradbury.

Homework: Create flash cards for each word, writing the word on one side and the definition, part of speech and an example sentence that purposefully shows the meaning of the word in a fully developed context. There will be copies of the story in class for you to see how the words are used in context. Please, do not take these stories out of the classroom.

Homework: Flashcards due Tuesday, 1/22

1/16/19

Today students had their last day to work on their allusion papers. The papers are due tomorrow and will be submitted to Mr. Butler as I will be out of school. In order for papers to be submitted they must have all of the following in this order:

Top -- Final draft

-- 1st (or any additional drafts) draft with hand-written revision marks

Bottom -- Prewriting paragraph organizers for each paragraph

Homework: Allusion essays due.

1/15/19

Today I checked in students' completed first drafts, and we used a checklist to guide the revision and editing process. After going over the revision checklist, students had the rest of the period to use the checklist to guide their hand-written revision notes.

Homework:

-Tonight go through each word and each line of your paper using the checklist as well as the other writing documents we've used this year, placing hand-written revision marks on your draft that specifically reference the requirements.

-Be ready to work on your final draft in class tomorrow. This is your last day, and tomorrow night is your last night.

-A final draft is due in class on Thursday 1/17. You must have all of the following items to submit your paper for on-time credit: Paragraph organization plans, first draft with hand-written revision marks, and a final draft.

1/11/19

Today we continued to write our allusion essays, focusing on concluding paragraphs.

Homework: Keep writing ! A printed-out, completed first draft is due on Tuesday. We will have a revision, editing and proofreading activity, so be ready!

1/9/19

Today students continued to write and plan out their body paragraphs.

Homework: Finish planning and write out your second body paragraph. If you'll need a third, continue to plan for and work on writing that paragraph.

1/8/19

Today students were issued a body paragraph organizer, and we went over it, noting the key elements to this essay's body paragraphs. The remainder of class time was spent conferencing with students and working on intro and body paragraphs.

Homework: Finish planning and write out your 1st body paragraph. Make sure you plan your 1st body with an idea of what you'll need to say in your other body paragraphs. Be ready to plan and write your second (and if necessary third) body paragraph tomorrow.

1/7/19

Today we discussed the key elements of an introduction paragraph, and students worked on thesis statements and their plan for their introduction.

Homework: Using your intro graphic organizer, write out a first draft of your intro paragraph at home tonight. Type (preferably) or handwrite.

1/4/19

Today we had a discussion in which we sought to figure out the themes developed in "FFA" and paralleled through the allusion to Genesis 3.

Here are some of the notes focusing on themes we put up on the board. Feel free to use these ideas as you work on your homework.

-loss of innocence

-duality in life (love/hate, happiness/sadness, life/death. . .)

-consequences of desire, progress, technology, knowledge, growing up. . .

Should Charlie have gotten the surgery? Should Adam have eaten from the tree?

Is ignorance really bliss?

Homework: Answer our EQ: What is the author's purpose (theme) of "FFA" and how does the author's use of the Genesis allusion help in expressing that theme?

-Write a potential thesis statement (remember all the elements that go into a good thesis statement!).

-Collect evidence from both stories to support your thesis.

1/2&3/19

Today we reviewed some of the connections/parallels between "FFA" and Genesis 3, and then students spent the remainder of class hunting for examples, placing them on their Genesis Allusion handout.

Homework: Complete the Genesis Allusions handout, making sure to fill in all the boxes, including the last one that requires students to synthesize their work in order to express the purpose behind the author's use of this allusion to the oldest story in the Bible.

12/20&21/18

Today we read Genesis 3, which was alluded to in FFA. Our goal is to determine why the author decided to do this.

Homework: Have a safe, restful and happy holiday!

12/19/18

Today we finished reading "Flowers for Algernon"

Homework: Write 10 specific positive outcomes and 10 specific negative outcomes due to Charlie's intelligence-tripling surgery.

12/17/18

Today we read "FFA" in class.

Homework: Prepare for tomorrow's vocab. quiz.

12/13/18

Today we discussed our vocabulary list for "Flowers for Algernon," preparing for the upcoming quiz on 12/18.

Homework: Thesis statements for T-T H due tomorrow (today for period 3).

12/10/18

Today students were issued a rubric that details how their T-T H thesis statement will be graded. We also looked at the "formula" or components needed to have a complete and effective thesis for this assignment. I've included that "formula" below.

literary element + single effect + relevance/so-what?

I also posted a few sentence frames students can use to structure their thesis statements. Please, see me if you need any further explanation or resources.

Homework: Keep drafting your thesis statement. It will take many drafts to complete this one sentence. When you submit your final draft of this thesis statement, you will also turn in all of the previous drafts of this sentence, illustrating your writing, revision and editing process. This is a 40-point assignment (just for one sentence!), so make sure you pay close attention to the details, using the resources that you've been provided. It will be due on Thursday the 13th for period 3 and due Friday the 14th for 4-6. You have time, but please come see me if you have questions or require some clarification.

Long-term homework:

- Flashcards due on 12/12 (periods 3 and 4) and 12/13 (periods 5 and 6)
- "Flowers for Algernon" Vocabulary quiz 12/18 all classes

12/7/18

Today students were presented with a handout on what goes in to a good thesis statement, and then students looked at some of their own sentences, evaluating their strengths and their opportunities for improvement.

Homework: Get started on making your flashcards for our upcoming short story, "Flowers for Algernon."

12/6/18

Today we had a formal discussion focused on determining Poe's single effect in "The T-T H" and how he uses certain literary elements to achieve that effect.

Homework: Write out three unique answers to our essential question for this story (What's the single effect and how does Poe use literary elements to achieve it").

12/3 & 4/18

Today we began to discuss the notes and answers from our recently completed activity worksheets, digging deeper into "The Tell-Tale Heart" with the end goal of determining the author's purpose and the literary elements used to achieve that purpose. Poe reference the author's purpose in short stories as the "single effect." Students were

issued a one-page version of a much longer essay written by Poe explaining this principle that guided his writing.

Homework: Actively read over the handout titled "The Importance of the Single Effect in a Prose Tale," identifying all vocabulary words you do not know well. Please, draw a box around these unfamiliar words and write a brief definition and/or a few well-chosen synonyms in the margins or empty lines of the story. We will have an open-note quiz over these words on Wednesday.

11/30/18

Today students worked on the issued Evidence Analysis Organizer for "The Tell-Tale Heart," focusing on how key literary elements contributed to Poe's storytelling. Our goal is to try to figure out Poe's single effect, which we'll work on next week where students will apply this week's work to a formal discussion.

Homework: Complete the Evidence Analysis Organizer for our next class.

11/29/18

Today students worked on Close Reading questions for "The Tell-Tale Heart" in preparation for a discussion we'll have focused on determining Poe's "single effect" for this short story.

Homework: Finish answering the close reading questions you were issued in class today.

11/28/18

Today students took their Tell-Tale vocab quizzes during most of the period, but those students who finished early had time to begin working on the issued Synthesis Worksheet for "The Tell-Tale Heart."

Homework: Fill out the first side (the side with the Response to Reading and Literary Elements Definitions) of the Synthesis Worksheet. Make sure to use complete sentences and specific details from the story to support your thoughts.

11/19/18

Today students reflected on their writing process using a Rose - Bud - Thorn activity, and then they shared out with the class. Any remaining class time was spent going over vocabulary for our upcoming short story.

Homework: Study for "The Tell-Tale Heart" vocabulary quiz on 11/27.

11/15/18

Today students were provided with the vocabulary list for our upcoming short story, "The Tell-Tale Heart," by Edgar Allan Poe.

The remainder of the period was spent putting the finishing touches on the "Raymond's Run" 1-paragraph, 1-page essays.

Homework:

-A final printed draft of the RR essay is due Friday. Along with their final drafts, students must submit a draft with handwritten revision and editing marks showing detailed evaluations and corrections tied to the issued checklist and Required Formal Essay Elements. Without these handwritten revisions, I will not accept a final draft.

-Tell-Tale vocab flashcards due on 11/19 (periods 3, 4 & 5) and 11/20 (period 6), and the quiz is scheduled for 11/27.

On one side of the flashcard write the word, and on the other side write the part of speech, the definition provided, and at least one original example sentence showing the meaning of the word in a well-developed context.

11/14/18

Today we went through the issued essay checklist, sharing examples of student work and evaluating the extent to which students met or did not meet the expectations of a formal essay.

Homework: Continue to mark up your printed draft, evaluating it line-by-line and word-by-word, following the prompts on the checklist and the bullets on the Required Formal Essay Elements handout.

Homework: Vocabulary from "The Tell-Tale Heart" is due Monday 11/19 for periods 3, 4, and 5 and due on Tuesday 11/20 for period 6. Get started ASAP!

Heads up: Tomorrow students will have one last day to finish their writing in class. Be sure to bring the draft you've been working on today! It's going to be crucial to this last step. Those hand-written revision marks are also required in order to submit a final draft on Friday. If school happens to be cancelled for inclement weather, the essay will be due the next school day, regardless if your class meets. Time will be afforded during Homeroom or Advisory to accommodate students whose class does not meet.

11/13/18

Today students had the whole period available to them to write their 1-page, single paragraph essays.

Homework: Continue writing, revising and editing. Bring your current draft to class printed out on paper for an activity tomorrow. If your printer at home is broken (like mine), be sure to run down to the library immediately upon entry into the building. You will not receive on-time credit if you do not have a printed copy at the very start of class.

11/9/18

Today in class students had an opportunity to write their one-paragraph, one-page, "Raymond's Run" essay. This short essay utilizes nearly all of the elements of essay writing we've learned so far this year and will be worth 100 points.

Homework: Continue to revise and edit your RR essay. Please, be certain to use the Basic Essay Template and the Required Formal Essay Elements hand out to guide your process.

Heads-up: A copy of this essay printed on paper is due Wednesday 11/14. The final draft is due Friday 11/16.

11/7/18

Today I provided feedback, making sure students had evidence that would effectively support their chosen claims. After students received approval, they began writing their one-page, single-paragraph mini-essays on "Raymond's Run."

Homework: Write a first draft supporting your RR claim, making sure to use your prewriting plan as well as the Template and Required Formal Essay Elements to guide your work.

11/6/18

Today students shared the themes that they are going to write about in their upcoming essay in response to the following essential questions: What is the author's purpose/theme and how does she use characterization to communicate that theme. (Be sure to reference the value and relevance of that theme within your thesis).

After going over the qualities of a good thesis (responds to the prompt, is specific, passes the so-what test. . .), students selected or created their own, and then they began to search for useful evidence.

Below are a list of potential claims/thesis statements that students are welcome to use.

1. Toni Cade Bambara characterizes Squeaky as an individual unafraid to forge her own identity in a world seeking to label her.
2. Toni Cade Bambara's dynamic character, Squeaky, illustrates that happiness can be found not only through respect for one's self, but through respect for others.
3. Toni Cade Bambara characterizes Squeaky as an individual who learns that a focus on similarities instead of differences can open the world to new and unforeseen opportunities.
4. Toni Cade Bambara's creation of the dynamic character, Squeaky, shows her reader that being true to one's self requires both strength and empathy.
5. Toni Cade Bambara's characterization of Squeaky illustrates that a person must seek to better understand others in order to better understand themselves.

Homework: Fill in the front and back of the Evidence Analysis prewriting handout. Be sure to find evidence that illustrates the change that the protagonist goes through. This means that you'll either have to paraphrase details or provide quoted evidence from both the first part of the story as well as the later part of the story, after the climax.

Be ready to write your paragraph in our next class.

11/5/18

Today we conducted a discussion designed to identify the various themes developed in the short story, "Raymond's Run."

Homework: Fill out the worksheet titled, "Passing the So-What Test." This activity is designed for students to explore the relevance of their chosen theme both in and outside of the story.

11/2/18

Today students were presented with questions to guide their rereading of "Raymond's Run," and then we reread the story aloud. Following the rereading, students briefly reflected on the the story in a freewrite, and then we began a discussion focused on the end goal of determining the story's themes.

Homework: Complete a full-page, handwritten freewrite reflecting on details from the text and how those details might shed light on the story's themes.

10/29&30/18

Today we corrected the worksheet titled More Sentence Structure Practice, focusing on identifying the four sentence types and the independent and dependent clauses used as building blocks for those sentence types.

During the second half of class students were assigned to focus on either the story's exposition, rising action, climax or falling action/resolution. Students were assigned to summarize that step of the plot line by writing sentences expressing the key details of that step. In two simple, two compound, two complex and two compound-complex sentences, make sure you've covered all the key details representing the conflicts, characters, setting, etc. . .

Homework: Complete the "RR" Sentence Variety Practice for our next class.

10/26/18

Today students read Toni Cade Bambara's short story, "Raymond's Run." While reading students answered reading questions.

Homework: Complete the "RR" reading questions.

10/25/18

Today students received their graded Outsiders essays. After reading over the essay along with my comments, students wrote out writing goals and reflected on their progress over the last two months.

Homework: Finish writing out goals. Please keep these goals in your binder so that we can reference them in the future.

Students wishing to further revise, edit and rewrite their Outsiders essays for a new grade must set up a time to conference with me outside of school. I am available Mondays after school and then on other days by appointment. Be prepared to discuss your paper and your revision plans in detail.

10/24/18

Today students reflected on the ways in which they improved their "Charles" paragraphs using varied sentence structures and the Basic Essay Template.

Homework: Complete the More Sentence Structure Practice worksheet for next class.

10/23/18

Today students shared their efforts to combine sentences, constructing complex, compound and compound-complex sentences. Students also showed off how they used complex sentences in their "Charles" paragraphs.

Homework: No new homework, but many students still have not identified or added in simple, complex and compound sentences to their paragraphs.

10/19&22/18

Today students continued to develop their skills relating to their use of simple, compound, complex and compound-complex sentences.

Homework: Finish your combining sentences worksheet.

10/18&19/18

Today we went over our Sentence Structure worksheets, where students were able to display their understanding of how to identify simple, compound, complex and compound-complex sentences.

Homework: Apply your work on the Sentence Variety handout to your "Charles" paragraph, handwriting in the margins and between lines new sentences. Please, make sure you have or have added in at least two complex sentences, one compound, one simple, if you're ready -- one compound-complex.

10/17&18/18

In class on Wed and Thursday students worked on developing their understandings of simple, compound, complex and compound-complex sentences

Homework: Complete Sentence Structure Practice worksheet and Sentence Variety worksheet. The Sentence Variety worksheet should be completed using your "Charles" paragraphs.

10/15/18

Today we reviewed the Basic Essay Template in preparation for tomorrow's quiz. We also introduced independent and dependent clauses. We'll continue focusing on this in the coming days in order to begin to vary our sentence structure.

Homework: Study for tomorrow's Basic Essay Template quiz. Students were given a double-sided blank template. Please use the blanks as a means of preparing for tomorrow's quiz. The quiz will be 30 points (same as a vocab. quiz).

10/12/18

Today we discussed our paragraphs, focusing on topic sentences, evidence, and the logic used to connect the evidence to the topic sentence in order to support the claim.

Homework: Revise your paragraphs and bring a printed-out, final draft to class Monday. Also, prepare for a quiz over the Basic Essay Template.

10/10&11/18

Today students decided which claim/evidence combinations developed on their Evidence Analysis Worksheets is the best, and they began to take the quotes, details and ideas from the worksheet and write out a paragraph.

Homework: Finish the paragraph you began in class, and have a draft of that paragraph ready for our next class.

10/5&10/18

Today students looked at their own Evidence Analysis Worksheets on the projector, assessing whether or not they met the basic expectations for evidence analysis.

Homework: Fill out both sides of the new Evidence Analysis Worksheet issued in class today, selecting a new claim - quote combination that makes logical sense. Please, choose from the quotes on the Evidence Analysis Organizer, and choose from the claims from the homework entry below.

10/4/18

Today we looked for patterns in our analysis of the short story, "Charles," and we used our understandings of those patterns to create some claims representing the author's purpose. Below are four claims that represent an author's purpose, focusing on her use of each of the four literary elements:

Example Claims

In her short story, "Charles," author Shirley Jackson uses **foreshadowing** to allow the reader to see clues missed by parents who refuse to acknowledge the bad behavior of their own child.

Shirley Jackson's use of **situational irony** in her short story, "Charles," highlights the humor and surprise experienced by parents who choose to ignore their own child's bad behavior.

Shirley Jackson's **characterization** of Laurie's mother in her short story, "Charles," illustrates a parent overcome by denial and unable to see her role in her child's bad behavior.

Through her use of an **unreliable, first-person narrator**, Shirley Jackson is able to allow a reader to experience the denial and surprise experienced by a parent unwilling to accept the truth behind her child's bad behavior.

During the second half of class we filled out an Evidence Analysis Worksheet where we broke down our evidence in order to support one of the claims.

Homework: Chose another claim from the above list (not the one we did in class) and, using detailed notes and well-crafted sentences, fill in the other side of the Evidence Analysis Worksheet.

10/3/18

Today we took our first vocabulary quiz! Very exciting. We also worked together on the issued Evidence Analysis Organizer, completing one of the ten entries required for tomorrow's homework.

Homework: Complete ten entries on the Evidence Analysis Organizer.

10/1/18

Today we went over our list of vocabulary words from the short story, "Charles."

Homework: Study for next Wednesday's vocabulary quiz. You'll have a section where you'll need to match the word with its definition and then there'll be a second half where you have to fit the 20 words into a story, filling in blanks. This half requires you to not only understand what the words mean, but how they are used in a sentence. The only way to be ready is to know those definitions and practice using the words in sentences. This will be a 40 point quiz, which will have a significant impact on your grade. Essays will take a few weeks to grade, but that's a 100-point assessment, which will have even more of an impact.

9/28/18

Today we re-read "Charles," looking for and recording details related to the following literary elements: plot, characterization, 1st person, unreliable narrator, situational irony, and foreshadowing. The goal of our close reading is to develop an understanding of the author's purpose.

Homework: Continue to fill in the Close Reading Notes handout, filling in all available space with short quotes, paraphrased details and analysis of the story and the author's use of literary elements. Due Monday.

Vocabulary flashcards homework is also due Monday. Be ready for Wednesday's quiz by studying over the weekend!

9/26-27/18

Today was a busy day in class. First students were introduced to our new list of 20 vocabulary words from our new short story. I'll review below in the Homework section how to do the vocab homework. Next, we corrected our literary terms pre-quiz, introduced literary elements we'll apply to our study of our first short story, "Charles," by Shirley Jackson, then we read that first short story, and students wrote free-write responses to the story.

Homework: On flashcards, write the vocab word on one side, and on the other side, write the part of speech, definition (see the handout provided) and an example sentence that purposefully shows the word's meaning in a well-developed context.

Vocab homework due Monday. Vocab quiz will be on Wednesday.

9/24/18

Today students submitted their Outsiders essays and reflected on their writing process by doing a Rose-Bud-Thorn reflection activity. We also had a short pop quiz where students filled in a blank essay template with their own memory of the template using their essays to guide their work. Hopefully students can see how they used this required document in their writing.

Homework: No new homework. :(

9/21/18

Today in class students continued to write revision and editing marks on their typed drafts, focusing on more specific aspects of the expectations stated on the issued essay documents. For example, students shouldn't just write, "fix topic sentence." They should actually fix the topic sentence right there on the draft, writing an appropriate topic sentence between the lines or in the margin.

Homework: Apply all revision and editing marks to a final draft to be submitted Monday. This draft should be no less than a page and a half and no more than two pages in length. Please submit a final typed copy, a typed copy with hand-written revision and editing marks, and all previous drafts and notes.

Be sure to read your work as you write. It is crucial to hear your work out loud. Even better -- give the Required Formal Essay Elements handout to a friend or family member and explain those requirements and then read your work to them, so they can hear whether you are meeting those requirements or not.

Good luck! I'm looking forward to reading your first official 8th grade essay!

9/20/18

Today I checked in students' typed drafts, and they began making revision marks directly on those typed drafts. I also revised and edited a few students' papers on the projector to show how the process is done.

Hand-written revision notes on a typed draft will be a required step in our writing process. Taking this step and going from computer screen back to paper and pencil works the brain in a new way that opens the mind up and allows the writer to see their work with new eyes.

Homework: On your printed drafts, closely read your work, marking it up line by line. Use the specific requirements found on the Template and Required Formal Essay Elements handouts to focus your work. Using these documents is not a suggestion. It is a requirement. I will use these documents as the basis for grading these essays, so you might as well mark them up before I do! Your future essay grade thanks you for doing so.

9/18&19/18

Today in class we worked on concluding paragraphs, and students tried their hands at writing one. A concluding paragraph should:

-Tie together the big ideas from each body paragraph to your thesis.

-Identify the problem that your essay has explored.

-Provide a solution, leaving the reader with a new understanding based on the evidence and argument you've provided in your essay. Be sure to use the issued document as you do this work.

Homework: Show up to class on Thursday with a typed, printed and completed draft of your Outsiders essay. This is your first essay for this class. It may not be perfect, but if

you follow the Basic Essay Template and the Required Formal Essay Elements handouts, you should do fine.

9/17/18

Today in class students reflected on improvements they have made thus far and things that still need to be improved on their Outsiders papers. The remainder of class was reserved for students to work on their writing and seek out help from me.

Homework: Continue revising and editing your Outsiders essay, spending at least a half an hour writing. If you have more reading to do because you are behind, then you will have more time that must be spent on ELA tonight. Don't forget! You must use the Basic Essay Template and the Required Formal Essay Elements handouts to guide your writing. These handouts cover the elements I will specifically look for when I grade these papers, so following these requirements as you write only makes sense. I know making sense is not always an 8th grader's strong suit, but maybe just give it a try. Who knows, it might just work!

Heads Up: A completed and printed hard copy of a final draft must be ready to submit in class on Thursday.

9/14/18

Today in class students were issued a new document titled, Required Formal Essay Elements. This document itemizes all the elements that should be included in the essays we write in 8th grade.

Also in class, students were issued a Simple Reverse Outline. A reverse outline is a worksheet that requires students to look at the key elements they have already included in their essays, determining if those elements meet the basic expectations we've learned so far this year. This reverse outline is simple in that it only deals with topic sentences and does not address evidence and analysis.

Homework: Finish filling out your Simple Reverse Outline worksheet. If your work on the reverse outline helps you to realize your topic sentences need fixing, then fix those topic sentences! After that, use the Required Formal Essay Elements to guide your continued revision and editing process. This essay should be between 1.5 and 2 pages when it's finished. We'll have about two more days to write in class next week, so keep writing over the weekend!

9/13/18

Today in ELA we backed up a bit and examined the Outsiders prompts that were issued this summer, looking to see how students can often determine an essay's paragraph organization by examining the expectations of prompt. In the two prompts, students were asked to note how the internal conflict evolved and the theme developed, focusing on examples from the beginning, middle and ending of the novel. Students were then able to determine that they should have at least three body paragraphs, each focusing on the important developments occurring roughly at the beginning, middle and ending of the book. Some students need to further revise their work to meet the prompt's requirements, but that's ok. We have time to fix this kind of thing.

Homework: Finish writing all body paragraphs by class on Friday. They don't have to be perfect. Just a revised draft that meets the Template's expectations. Take a look at the red link below. It illustrates how our model essay exhibits the Templates' elements.

Good luck!

9/12/18

Today we looked at a model essay that follows the Basic Essay Template issued yesterday. Students identified how the model exhibited the qualities of an 8th-grade-level essay.

Homework: Revise your Outsiders essay, focusing on a second body paragraph. Be absolutely certain to follow the template as you proceed.

Model Essay with Labels Reflecting the Template's Components

9/11/18

Today in class students were issued their Basic Essay Template, a document that provides the fundamental components necessary to write effective essays in 8th grade. After going over the document, students were asked to select one of their two summer essays to revise and submit. Our first step in the revision process is summarized below in the homework posting.

Homework:

1. Select either your internal conflict or your theme essay to revise. Choose whichever draft is most interesting to you and represents your best ideas. During our revision and editing process we'll fix up whatever needs fixing.
2. Read over your chosen draft, assessing your writing, looking to see if you have met any of the expectations shown on the Template. Note the way you specifically did or did not meet the Template's expectations in the margins of your summer draft.
3. Write an introductory paragraph that meets the expectations of the Template. You may keep some of what you wrote this summer and just improve it, or you may have to ditch it all and start over. That's your call. Either way -- you need to show up tomorrow with a intro that follows all the requirements of the Template.

4. Write a first body paragraph that meets the expectations of the Template. You may keep some of what you wrote this summer and just improve it, or you may have to ditch it all and start over. That's your call. Either way -- you need to show up tomorrow with a first body paragraph that follows all the requirements of the Template.

Type it out if you can! The final draft will have to be submitted as a typed document.

9/6-7/18

Today we worked through our first Socratic Discussion, and it was an impressive success. While we still need to work on our use of formal transitions, students did a good job of interacting with each other, making assertions, and supporting those claims with textual evidence. These skills will be very useful after we introduce our writing process and begin to revise our Outsiders papers next week.

Homework: Using specific and detailed language, please fill out the Post-Discussion Reflection handout issued in class. Be sure to complete this homework (due next class) as soon as possible, while the ideas and experiences from our discussion are still fresh in your head.

9/5-6/18

Today students submitted their final drafts of their Six-Word Memoir, and then they corrected their Outsiders comprehension quiz. After that we continued to prepare for our upcoming Socratic Discussion by going over discussion norms as well as sentence frames that will help to structure our discussions.

Homework: To prepare for our upcoming discussion, students were assigned to complete a two-sided Discussion Prep worksheet. The expectation is that students are to find two of the most meaningful excerpts/quotes from the novel and then express the

significance of those quotes by reading first "on the line," then "between the lines," and then ultimately, "beyond the lines."

9/4/18

Today we continued to discuss the revision process used to produce effective Six-Word Memoirs. After that, students were issued a handout covering the three levels of understanding (reading on the line, between the lines, and beyond the lines). On the handout were examples illustrating the way in which questions can be constructed to draw out understandings about the text at each of the three levels.

Here's what one of our classes created when we collaboratively worked to write questions on each of the three levels:

On-the-line Understanding: Who are the two groups of people in this novel?

Between-the-line Understanding: What are the conflicts between the Socs and Greasers?

Beyond-the-line Understanding: What does SE Hinton want her readers to understand about the differences that divide groups of people?

Homework:

-Write three questions you want answered about *The Outsiders*, representing each of the three levels of understanding (9 questions total) in preparation for a discussion we'll have in our next class.

-After going through our full revision process, neatly write the final draft of your Six-Word Memoir on the piece of white paper issued in class in black marker in the shape of a puffy cloud (just like the example I showed you in class on Tuesday). Be ready to say a few words about your memoir and your writing process.

Heads Up! Bring your Outsiders books to class every day from now on.

8/31/18

Today we took a reading comprehension quiz over *The Outsiders*. After that we focused on revising and editing our Six-Word Memoirs by manipulating and improving the punctuation, diction, capitalization, use of action verbs, figurative language, sounds devices, and word order.

Homework: Use all available space on the Six-Word Memoir Revision sheet, filling it with new words, ideas, phrasings, punctuation, and sentence structures to illustrate your revision progress. Due Tuesday.

8/30/18

You made it through day one of 8th grade ELA!

Today in ELA . . .

- We introduced ourselves.**
- I introduced students to our class website.**
- We were introduced to Six-Word Memoirs. Here's a link: [Six-Word Memoir Website](#)**

Homework:

- Write out ten Six-Word Memoirs. These are just drafts. Try to cover a variety of aspects of yourself. We'll revise and edit these, eventually selecting one to post on our back bulletin board.
- Be ready for a reading comprehension quiz over *The Outsiders*. Don't freak out. If you read the book and understood it, you should do fine.
- Since you've closely read my website's posting, remember this for extra credit bonus on tomorrow's quiz: My sister had a goldfish named Sodapop, because he was very handsome.

Welcome to 8th grade language arts!

For the first day of school, please make sure you have read *The Outsiders* and completed the required writing assignment issued to you by your 7th grade teacher or the guidance office over the summer.

I have posted a digital copy of the packet on the top of the Documents page of this website for your convenience.

I am looking forward to meeting you on the first day of school! Until then, enjoy your summer!

