

“The Cores”

A Writing Program for High School

One summer, many years ago, as I was pondering ways to teach my classes how to write, I “invented” the cores. I designed the system at the time for my own classes, juniors and seniors, but when I asked Father Ayd, S.J., about his opinion on my approach to teaching my students this system, he and the principal, Daniel Kennedy, decided they wanted them to be the basis of writing for the entire school. I worked on expanding them until they encompassed all four years.

That a student be able to write in “cores” for the rest of her life is not the purpose of the program. The core style is so encompassing, however, that if students can learn to handle this type of structure, they can develop a unique style of their own because they will know all the components of a sentence and how to arrange and re-arrange those components.

Being able to arrange words well, after all, is style. A first grade student may be able to write clear prose, (e.g. I saw a cat.) but his style leaves us with a chilling effect. Prying students from the subject-verb-object syndrome is the task of a teacher who would teach style.

Freshman year does not concentrate on writing paragraphs or the analysis of novels. For freshmen, I designed the course to introduce

them to the complexities of structure in a sentence and teach them how to vary their sentence structure to achieve style. Since freshmen are studying phrases, clauses, participles, gerunds, etc. in grammar books, and since some are studying Latin grammar, I feel it is a propitious time to teach them how to work grammar and syntax into their writing.

Because writing is a deliberate, conscious, painstaking crafting of language, students must be able to break a sentence into its component parts and re-assemble it. The “core” system uses the component parts of language and rebuilds them in a myriad of ways.

If there is glamour in teaching writing, it does not lie in the freshman year. Like first grade, however, it is the most important year for a student’s learning to write. It is in freshman year that a teacher introduces her to complex grammar and sentence structure. If we can teach a student how to use a core structure and preserve the sense of what she is saying, we can accomplish our goal.

When I teach my students how to write poetry and begin by teaching them meter and rime and the discipline of form in a sonnet, they scream in protest that I’m inhibiting their creativity. But soon they realize how important it is to learn the fundamentals before they try to put the way they feel the world into poetic form. If there is one point I want to emphasize, it is that my objective in the program is to give the

student, by senior year, a power over words so she can make them do anything she wants them to do. Being able to control language is a giddy, rollercoaster ride.

And for a teacher to take the time and patience to read and correct the clumsy, awkward sentences students write as they attempt to fuse their ideas with structure is essential for the program to work and students to learn. The reward for the teacher is a giddy ride on that same rollercoaster.

In sophomore year, the writing program branches out. The cores now serve a double purpose: they are used to develop unified, coherent paragraphs, and they are employed to analyze the novels the sophomores are reading.

As I have stated, the purpose of the writing program is to teach students how to develop their own unique style, not to write using only cores. And so sophomore year has ten additional essays, in different styles from the cores, which instruct students how to develop essays by using various techniques such as developing paragraphs by: contrast, humor, persuasion, characteristic trait, prophecy, philosophy, nostalgia, morality, etc. There are brief summaries after each paragraph to explain how to develop an idea with logic and coherence.

In sophomore year, there are also several examples of writing, from the scriptures to twentieth century writing, to teach the student how great writers develop style and how writers

of the present have borrowed stylistic devices from both Judaic and Hellenistic styles of writing.

In junior year, there are more complex examples of using cores in the analysis of novels. In addition, the essays which use various styles of writing focus on how to defend a position, state a novel theme, write philosophical opinions, handle abstract ideas, etc. The students may let their minds roam unfettered through ideas and stylistic devices.

In senior year not only are there cores and creative essays, but there are a new group of essays which focus on style and the many methods writers employ to achieve their own unique styles. There are essays which teach students how to write satire, fantasy, interior monologue, vernacular dialogue, impressionism, exhortation, etc.

I believe the program is expansive enough for students since it incorporates a multiplicity of styles. It is true the “cores” are the core of the program, but they are not even half the program in a student’s last three years.

Teaching writing, in my mind, is not correcting compositions. It is teaching students how to write. Writing is a craft, and it should be our purpose to teach each student that this craft can be learned by all and that it is not a talent restricted to a few gifted students.

To teach the core system, a teacher must devote an entire class once a week to teaching a

paragraph of five sentences, each of which includes one core.

Technique:

1. Explain the “core” part of the sentence, the way in which it fits into the sentence grammatically: e.g. as an adjectival clause, as an adverbial clause, an infinitive phrase used as a noun, as correlative words, etc.

2. Explain how the “core” fits into the sentence from the point of syntax, i.e. how it changes the arrangement of words to vary the basic subject-verb-object structure.

3. Use the blackboard or the smart-board to engage the class as a group to write a similar sentence. Try to work through all five sentences of the paragraph.

4. After the class completes its collective sentences on the board, have students practice writing similar sentences on their own.

5. For homework, assign students the task of writing an imitation of the paragraph using the “core” of each sentence. You may want to allow them several days to work on this assignment.

The Cores for Freshmen

Phrases:

1. In freshman year at Scranton Prep, a student begins to study the craft of writing.

(Two introductory adverbial prepositional phrases)

2. With mathematical precision and a scientific approach, the professor teaches the student how to structure her sentence.

(Introductory adverbial prepositional phrase with two objects)

3. The system of writing in use at Prep is called the “Core System.”

(Three prepositional adjectival phrases after the subject and modifying the subject)

4. Realizing the need for a continuous program throughout the four years of high school, the English Department has adopted this method as part of its curriculum.

(Introductory present participial phrase)

5. To develop each student’s ability to the point where she can write with clarity and facility is the goal of the program.

(Introductory infinitive phrase as subject of the sentence)

6. The day after an examination in literature, some students forget the names of the characters about whom they have read.

(Several introductory prepositional adverbial phrases, the first phrase without a preposition)

7. Drilled week after week in the core method, however, a student will never forget this system of writing and will use it throughout her life.

(Introductory past participial phrase)

8. The Core system has the advantages of providing specific examples to imitate, of a concrete approach to developing style, and of a graduated scale of complex structure.

(Accumulation of adjectival prepositional phrases modifying the direct object, advantages)

9. Teachers can give any willing and ambitious student the tools by which she may become an excellent writer.

(Indirect object after the subject and verb and before the direct object)

10. With dedication, with determination, and with commitment, every student at Prep will be able to write as well as the best students in the country.

(Series of introductory phrases using the same preposition which brings “balance” in structure)

11. Writing well is having power.
(Gerund phrases, one as subject, one as predicate nominative)

12. When a student begins her freshman year at Prep, she should take advantage of the opportunities which will be offered to her in the art of public speaking.

(Introductory adverbial clause)

13. A student must reach the conclusion that her ability to express her ideas in a clear and logical manner will be important to her career.

(Noun clause in apposition with the object)

14. One reason a student should learn to speak well is that she may be able to persuade other people to follow her judgment on matters that she considers of importance.

(Noun clause as predicate nominative)

15. After a student has learned to express her ideas and has acquired skill in speaking before an audience, she will become a more confident person.

(Introductory adverbial clause with a compound predicate)

16. Students who are not willing to work at becoming good speakers should not allow themselves to be uninterested in writing.

(Restrictive relative clause following the subject)

17. Prep students go to college, although there are exceptions, and any student who goes to college will spend much of his time writing papers.

(An adverbial concessive clause between two independent clauses)

18. What will make college easier and one's marks higher is the skill with which a person is able to write.

(Noun clause as the subject of the sentence)

19. This statement is based on a teacher's attitude that a paper deserves a high mark if it is well written.

(Noun Clause in apposition with the object of a preposition)

20. College teachers, who appreciate structured papers, mark poorly written papers lower since they must spend so much time in correcting them.

(Nonrestrictive relative adjectival clause after the subject)

21. A college teacher has a right to expect papers free of technical errors after a student has spent twelve years in school.

(Adverbial clause following the main clause)

Correlatives:

22. **Some** students at Prep take advantage of the academic opportunities offered to them; **others** are content to do the minimum amount of study to pass.

23. Many students become **either** so absorbed in extracurricular activities **or** so consumed with athletics that they find their studies a burden.

24. **Not only** are some students unaware of what a solid education Prep has to offer them, **but** they are **also** indifferent to its significance for their own futures.

25. As freshmen, students find themselves in the dilemma of deciding **whether** to participate in extracurricular activities with boundless enthusiasm **or** to study their textbooks and companion assignments with reckless zeal.

26. **Both** those who pursue extracurricular activities **and** those who study with zeal must learn to strike a balance between extremes, the mark of a wise person.

Appositives:

27. In every facet of a student's education, the study of Latin, the writing of compositions, the solving of math problems, the memorization of historical facts, there is a design to help a student think with logic and to choose with wisdom.

(Noun phrases in apposition with the object of a preposition)

28. The immediate goal, the acquisition of knowledge, is the accumulation of as many facts as one can absorb.

(Noun phrase in apposition with the subject of the sentence)

29. Throughout life a person meets new and challenging situations, a fact which cannot be overlooked, and her ability to apply her knowledge to solve these new problems is intelligence.

(Noun in apposition with the preceding clause)

30. All of a person's life could be spent in this noble goal: to pursue knowledge and intelligence to the extent of one's capabilities.

(Infinitive phrase in apposition with the object of a preposition)

31. A lover of knowledge and intelligence, the best student will reach the final step of his journey, in which she learns to decide well and through which she becomes a wise person.

(Apposition with the subject, appositive first)

Balance and Antithesis , Parallel Structure

32. Students at Scranton Prep are a mixture of rich and poor, of superior intelligence and of average intelligence, and of various ethnic and religious backgrounds.

33. To expect that there will be neither cliques nor personality clashes in such an amalgam is to be naïve; to expect that all students will mingle with ease with one another is to be unrealistic.

34. Preaching the ideal, but practicing the possible is the best that one can do in an imperfect society of which Prep is a microcosm.

35. Understanding this about Prep will enable new students to work for the ideal school environment with optimism tempered by reality, with determination tempered by understanding, with forcefulness tempered by compassion.

36. If a student learns to be tolerant, to be diplomatic, and to be realistic during her freshman year at Prep, she will be much happier during her four years of high school.

Methods of Developing Sentences

37. The time of one's life called adolescence is more challenging than any other, not because amazing things are happening to one's body, but because a young person must make so many choices.

(Contrast)

38. Whether to choose the scientific or classical curriculum, which college or university to attend, what career or profession to pursue: these are some of the perplexing decisions that a student must make.

(Enumeration)

39. Just as too many people speaking at one time can confuse someone who is trying to listen to a conversation, so may a great number of choices perplex a young person.

(Comparison)

40. Learning to make difficult decisions is important, however, because being responsible for the choices one makes is the mark of a mature person.

(Cause or Purpose or Reason)

41. Some freshmen may become so discouraged over the amount of study required of them that they may want to leave Prep.

(Effect or Result)

42. A student may decide to withdraw because her former grade school classmates don't have to study long hours and are having a great time in high school.

(Cause or Purpose)

43. If the principal goal of a student is to have fun, perhaps she should return to her coterie of friends who looks askance at any young person who wants to improve her mind.

(Conditional)

44. If a freshman is able to see beyond the pleasure of these immediate four years, however, she will realize that deferring pleasure will pay off in handsome dividends of a college education, a storehouse of learning, and a fulfilling job.

(Conditional)

45. There is so great a difference between the potential of a college educated person and a high school graduate that to be unwilling to sacrifice for a future reward is irresponsible.

(Effect or Result)

46. Not all students are meant to stay at Prep, of course, but those who leave to make life easier for themselves are making a poor decision.

(Contrast)

Inversion of the Predicate: (Before the subject)

47. There is something so refreshing about freshmen that most teachers relish the opportunity to teach them.

48. Perhaps there exist in them an optimism, an idealism, and an enthusiasm for Prep that a teacher sometimes notices turning to apathy as a student moves through the upper grades.

Imperative: (Command)

49. “Put the foundations under castles you have built in the air,” Henry David Thoreau writes in *Walden*.

50. Make certain that your dreams are based on the firm foundation of possibility, but do not give up your vision of what might be, is what he means.

Hortatory: (Using the first person plural and the third person singular and plural)

51. Let us resolve not to let ourselves slip into complacency, into apathy, or into cynicism.

52. Let us rather persuade the rest of the students that school can be a joyful place and school spirit a great deal of fun.

53. If some cannot do this, however, let them not spread their cynicism among other students.

Optative: (Wish)

54. Would that all students were able to carry both their optimism and their ideals through the four years of high school.

Dialogue:

55. "I'm a freshman," he said to the senior girl, "and I don't understand Latin well. What do these words mean, '*ad altiora natus*'?"

56. "They're the motto of Prep," she said. "The best translation is, 'Born for higher things.'"

57. "Does it mean anything to a Prep student," he asked, "or does it just sound nice, like 'Cavaliers'?"

58. "It means something to me," she said. "It means that you and I are special, each and every one of us."

59. "It doesn't mean that to me now," he said, "but I hope that someday it will. It would be great if each of us was special."

Sophomore Writing Program:

Example I Use of Cores 1 to 5

The Strength of Juliet

In evaluating the character of Juliet Capulet, the reader sees a girl who is both passionate and strong willed. (Core 1: two introductory phrases) When Juliet realizes that Romeo is a Montague and one of her family's enemies, she does not let this interfere with her love for him. (Core 2: introductory adverbial clause) Not only is she determined that her love for Romeo will transcend such bitter feuding, but she is also willing to deceive her family in order to marry Romeo. (Core 3: correlative words) Her determination to love Romeo above all others is a remarkable quality, not because it involves an act of parental defiance, but because she realizes love must triumph over hatred. (Core 4: development by contrast) Would that Romeo had known of Friar Lawrence's plan so that these star-crossed lovers might have lived to enjoy their marriage and their love. (Core 5: optative – wish)

Tom Sawyer, All American Boy

Tom Sawyer has become a symbol for all romantic children, for every youngster with a boundless imagination, and for the all American boy. (Core 6: Several adjectival phrases modifying the predicate nominative) What makes Tom Sawyer so interesting and his personality so fascinating is the variety of adventures in which he becomes involved. (Core 7: noun clause as subject of the sentence) Some people in this life are enthusiastic about every opportunity presented to them; others are bored with the most exciting possibilities offered to them. (Core 8: correlative words) Playing Robin Hood with his friends, racing ticks, fighting mock battles, and planning a career as a pirate are some of the wild places through which his imagination roams. (Core 9: Development by enumeration of subjects) Let us, like Tom, resolve not to let our imagination become torpid or our dreams to become hazy. (Core 10: exhortation in the first person)

Being Alone is not always Lonely.

Because Manuel's parents thought Santiago had bad luck and believed he would catch no fish, they would not let the boy fish with him. (Core 11: Introductory adverbial clause with a compound predicate) The prospect of being alone in his boat at sea did not trouble the old man. (Core 12: Three prepositional phrases following the subject) Many people grow either so used to having people around them or so dependent upon other people's ideas that they become lonely when they are alone. (Core 13: Correlative words) The sea, the fish, his memories, and his heroes provided as much company for the old man as anyone could wish. (Core 14: Accumulation of subjects, development by enumeration) Make certain that you have made companions of things other than people for those times when you will be alone. (Core 15: Imperative or command)

*The Old Man and the Sea***Hold Your Head up High.**

A good reader will reach the conclusion that a series of symbols makes this novel interesting and the character of Santiago fascinating. (Core 16: Noun clause in apposition with the object of the verb) Believing that success is not the lot of man, Hemingway uses Santiago as a symbol of man's struggle in life. (Core 17: Introductory present participial adjectival phrase) There is so great a struggle between the old man and the huge marlin that the reader may feel that Santiago will bring his catch to shore and enjoy the fruits of his courageous battle. (Core 18: Effect or Result) To expect the sharks will not come to deprive the old man of his great catch is unrealistic; to expect the old man will be able to kill all of them is naïve. (Core 19: Balance in parallel structure) No one can control the tragic things that happen to him in life, but Hemingway's theme is that each of us can control his attitude toward tragedy. (Core 20: Development by contrast)

The Good Earth

“Where Rust and Moth Consume....”

Wang Lung, who is the protagonist of the novel, decides that the key to wealth is to acquire as much land as he can. (Core 21: Nonrestrictive clause after the subject) With dedication, with resourcefulness, and with commitment, Wang Lung sets out to achieve his goal by acquiring land from the house of Hwang. (Core 22: Series of introductory phrases using the same preposition- also balance) One reason Wang Lung is determined to succeed is that he wishes his sons to have the education which he himself has never had. (Core 23: Noun clause as predicate nominative) The riches Wang Lung achieves, however, are of a destructive nature because he cannot temper his desires. (Core 24: Development by cause or purpose) Wang Lung’s ultimate goal, the stability of his sons and their unity through a love of the land, is a pipe-dream, for his sons intend to sell his lands after he dies. (Core 25: Noun phrase in apposition with the subject of the sentence)

To Kill a Mockingbird

Way to go, Atticus!

To stress the important effect of a parent's character and example on the life of his children is the major theme of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. (Core 26: Infinitive phrase as the subject of the sentence) **The one thing that a child is most impressed by is a parent who lives by his principles.** (Core 27: Restrictive adjectival clause modifying the subject) **As a white lawyer, Atticus finds himself in the dilemma of deciding whether to defend the black man and endure the wrath of his community or to refuse the case and compromise his principles.** (Core 28: Correlative words) **Preaching idealism, but practicing pragmatism, is hypocritical in his eyes, and so he defends Tom Robinson.** (Core 29: Antithesis in parallel structure) **If the principal goal of a parent is to set standards by which a child may lead his life, Atticus's courage and unfailing courtesy provide Jem and Scout with the perfect model.** (Core 30: Conditional clause)

The Red Badge of Courage

“The gods hate utterly, the bray of bragging tongues.” (From *Antigone*)

Henry Fleming pictures himself as a hero, although he has never been in battle before, and he imagines himself performing heroic deeds on the field of honor. (Core 31: An adverbial concessive clause between two independent clauses) The actual firing of guns and cannon, however, has the effect of terrorizing Henry, of preventing him from firing his weapon, and of causing him to desert the battlefield. (Core 32: Accumulation of adjectival phrases modifying the object) During his flight, Henry attempts to rationalize his desertion, a deed which is difficult to excuse, and he even manages to convince himself that it is reasonable to flee danger just as the animals in the forest do. (Core 33: Noun in apposition with the object of the infinitive) Henry does return to the war with a mixture of bravado and fear, of determination and vacillation, and of reality and romance. (Core 34: Balance and antithesis in parallel structure) Henry is no more a hero when he fights with bravery than when he flees, for Crane’s theme is that man’s actions are neither noble nor cowardly, but instinctive. (Core 35: Two independent clauses)

Example VIII Use of Cores 36 to 40

A Separate Peace

“To Thine Own Self Be True....” *Hamlet*

Many years after his graduation from Devon School, Gene Forrester visits his *alma mater* which holds some painful memories of his friendship with Phineas. (Core 36: Several introductory phrases, the first without a preposition) There is an old sadness in remembering the trauma of Phineas’s death that has changed Gene’s attitude about life. (Core 37: Inversion of the predicate) Like the sun emerging from a veil of clouds, Gene abandons his rationalization by accepting responsibility for jouncing the limb of the tree. (Core 38: Development by comparison) Gene was violent with his friend because he was jealous not only of Phineas’s athletic ability, but also of Phineas’s loyalty as a friend, loyalty that Gene knew he could not reciprocate. (Core 39: Development by cause or purpose) A young person who is unsatisfied with his own identity may make Gene’s mistake of measuring himself by the accomplishments of a friend. (Core 40: Restrictive clause following the subject)

The Lord of the Flies

“A Little Less than the Angels...?”

William Golding examines in his modern allegory whether the evil man does arises from his nature or his environment. (Core 41: Phrase after the subject and the verb and before the object) The boys are removed from a society of laws to an island devoid of any semblance of authority, and the reader reaches the conclusion that they are not able to cope with such freedom. (Core 42: Noun clause in apposition with the object of the verb) Casting off even the rudiments of civilization, Jack’s group reverts to murder to achieve its end after it has been on the island but a short time. (Core 43: Adverbial clause after the main clause) It causes one to think, this sudden reversion to primitive passions, and to wonder whether man may not have a natural proclivity to evil which only society can restrain. (Core 44: Use of the pronoun as subject, and then the subject for which it stands) Although Ralph and Piggy represent the noble side of man, Jack and his followers represent Golding’s basic theme: to yield to baser instincts is indigenous to man’s nature. (Core 45: Infinitive clause in apposition with the object)

*Ethan Frome***“The Devil You Know.....”**

Every facet of Ethan Frome’s life—the hard work on the farm, the constant complaining of Zeena, the loss of his dream of becoming an engineer—has served to crush his spirit. (Core 46: Phrases in apposition with the subject of the sentence) Ethan Frome becomes so discouraged about Mattie’s leaving that he agrees to join Mattie in a suicide pact. (Core 47: Result or Effect) There is a terrible irony when serious injuries and not death are the result of their crashing into the elm tree. (Core 48: Inversion of the predicate) If Ethan Frome thinks life without Mattie would be unbearable, let him realize that things are never so bad as they may become. (Core 49: Exhortation or indirect command in the third person) Bearing the burdens and carrying the crosses life inflicts on us may not be the worst of all possible worlds. (Core 50: Balance in parallel structure)

Development of Essays by Various Techniques

Example I

Contrast

Whose life is it, anyway?

Dogs are social animals. They want to lick our face, snuggle up against us, and persuade us to pet them. In an age of individualism when each of us is trying to establish her own identity, dogs will have none of it.

Being with their family all the time is their idea of happiness. Even if they spend much of this time dozing, it is the physical presence of those they love which makes the world a good place for them. And when they commit an egregious household sin and are chastised, they lower their heads, put their tail between their legs, and skulk to a corner.

Cats, on the other hand, are imperious individualists. On occasion they give us permission to stroke them, but with the understanding such permission may be withdrawn at any moment. Whenever they use their tongues, it is to cleanse themselves, not to bestow affection on us.

Except for a fastidious devotion to their litter box, they are notorious in defying household rules. They climb over any barrier designed to confine them. They lounge on chairs and couches and even stretch out on tables on which meals are served. And when they are castigated for such behavior, they feel no guilt, only outrage when they are removed from such areas.

Is it a dog or a cat's life we lead?

Paragraph 1. Social traits of dogs.

Paragraph 2. Individual characteristics

Paragraph 3. Social traits of cats

Paragraph 4. Individual characteristics

Paragraph 5. Conclusion

Topics: Females versus males; science versus liberal arts

A Litigious Bunch

What we citizens of the United States cherish more than anything else in the world is freedom, the right to do whatever is lawful under the Constitution. It is not only the great freedoms—of the press, of assembly, of private property, of religion—that we hold dear, but all the ramifications of these freedoms we believe affect our pursuit of personal happiness.

We will go to court, if necessary, over anything. If you own a restaurant and you do not have a handicapped ramp for those of us who have need of one, we will sue you. If you stop us from selling adult pornography, we will take our case before the Supreme Court of the land. If you do not allow our one hundred-five pound daughter to play on the varsity football team, we will sue you for sexual discrimination.

Our history plays an important part in our national character. To gain independence, our forefathers fomented rebellion against unjust taxation. They established a democracy that has lasted longer than any other in history. The American Civil Liberties Union has championed even the most unpopular causes in defense of individual rights.

The citizens of other countries may yield to the general welfare of society, but a citizen of the United States yields to nothing but the law of the land.

Paragraph 1. Unique characteristic of U.S. citizens

Paragraph 2. Example of rights we will pursue

Paragraph 3. Historical reasons for our actions

Paragraph 4. Conclusion

Topics: Characteristic traits of an ethnic group

“Men for Others.....”

Life, in and of itself, may not be significant. In some instances, merely to survive may be worthy of praise, but for most of us, this is not the case.

As life comes to each of us, moment by moment, it has no form, no pattern. It is our task to shape it into something that has meaning and purpose, to make sense of its luck, its accidents, its chaos. In other words, we have to give life meaning because life has no power to give itself meaning.

We can strive for wealth and power as our goal in life. We can become sybarites and taste all of life’s pleasures. We can settle into a job and family life, enjoying our spouse and children. Whatever we choose to do, however, there will come a time when we will analyze our life and consider how significant we have made it.

Those who live their lives in the service of others, who minister to those in need, have formed their lives well. In subordinating their own desires to those of their fellow man, they achieve a selflessness that makes them the most noble among us. In every corner of the world, they give up their lives that others may live or die with their humanity intact. They are men and women for others.

Paragraph 1. Proposing a question for discussion

Paragraph 2. Our responsibility for our own life

Paragraph 3. Possible ways of shaping our life

Paragraph 4. Choosing a noble way of life

Topic: The value in being an educated person

A Partridge in a Pear Tree

Every Christmas I make a list of ten or twelve things I would like as gifts, and I give the list to my parents, my brothers, my sisters, my children, and my wife. None of the articles on the list costs more than twenty dollars.

Making a list of acceptable presents is being considerate. My relations do not have to agonize over choosing something they pray I won't return the day after Christmas. They know in advance I will be pleased. And yet, I have never received one of the gifts on my list.

When I berate my family for this and explain the wisdom of my list, they become hostile and abusive. They tell me that half the enjoyment in giving presents is seeing the surprise on the face of the person when he has opened the package. They scoff at my unimaginative and structured approach to gift giving. They chastise me for trying to make Christmas into a bartering game.

Despite their obstreperous protests, I am preparing my list for next Christmas. One of these years my reason will prevail over their emotion, and I will receive everything on my list.

Paragraph 1. Making a choice out of the ordinary

Paragraph 2. Justifying such a choice

Paragraph 3. Reaction against the choice

Paragraph 4. Ultimate justification of the choice

Topic: Dealing with my mildly neurotic self

The Future

The world we live in is circumscribed. There is only so much land, so much oil, so much coal. Some resources can be replenished such as trees and water, but others will run out.

Unless we manage to destroy the world by a nuclear holocaust, the earth will continue with its growing population for centuries. And our descendants will need raw resources to convert into energy, food, shelter, and clothing. Therein lies the problem.

Even if we stop squandering our resources, even if we cut down on our consumption, our resources will be depleted. So we need people whose vision transcends the ephemeral to provide alternate sources of supply. Perhaps such sources will come from space, the ocean, genetic engineering, or something not even known at this time.

We are responsible for those who come after us. It is incumbent upon us to be provident.

Paragraph 1. The problem in general

Paragraph 2. Specific aspects of the problem

Paragraph 3. Possible solutions

Paragraph 4. Conclusion

Suggested topic: Energy solutions

From One Gene to Another

“She looks just like her mother.” “She has her father’s disposition.” “Your sister was an excellent student.” “Your brother was such a polite boy.” “He’s shorter than his father.” “She has those short legs like her mother.”

Comparisons. Is there anything so odious in the world? We either have all the bad traits of our lineage or fail to measure up to the good traits. Somehow or other, when people get out their comparison charts, we fall short.

Perhaps older people expect the next generation to be more intelligent, more polite, better looking, and, therefore, we disappoint them. It’s as if they want to believe that day by day the human race is getting better and better in every way.

I wonder if it might be presumptuous to wish that people would place a moratorium on comparisons, that they would allow us to be the unique, singular individuals that God wants us to be and to become.

Paragraph 1. Quotations that compare one person to another

Paragraph 2. Comparisons are hateful

Paragraph 3. Why people make comparisons

Paragraph 4. What the writer would like to see happen

Suggested topics: Hair; clothes

**“The Medium is the Message.”
Marshall McLuhan**

We’ve got to jog, do aerobics, stay thin, smell good, dress well, eat junk food, and feed our cat irresistible meals. These messages have been on T.V. for a long time, and they are innocuous, obvious ploys to induce us to spend money.

There are, however, images that convey a message, insidious and indigenous to the medium. The beautiful people. The luxurious homes. The designer clothes. The exciting lives. We watch them and we believe in the images. And because they permeate all our senses, we feel that our lives are banal in comparison.

In the days of radio, not only were the programs about average, hard-working people, but even when they weren’t, we weren’t made to feel inferior by seeing handsome men and svelte women.

Today, when so many poor people watch T.V., they feel like outcasts, as if those on T.V. have been chosen, while they have been left to press their noses against the window while others enjoyed the feast.

Paragraph 1. Harmless televisions commercials

Paragraph 2. Dangerous messages on television

Paragraph 3. A less dangerous medium

Paragraph 4. The effect of television on some viewers

Suggested topic: Song lyrics

Terrorism

Something new has crept into our world, new at least on an international scale. In the midst of weapons that can launch Armageddon have come individual acts of terrorism that intimidate and maim and kill. Nuclear warfare we have kept at bay. Terrorism has us baffled.

People who are willing to die for a cause, perhaps to avenge the deaths of their own people, are hijacking planes and ships and bombing restaurants and buses. Wherever we go, we may find ourselves among their victims.

Life has its uncertainties. Accidents, sudden death, rare diseases. These are part of the human condition, and though we may fear them, we accept them. To a certain extent, we can even exercise some control over them if we are wary.

To be at the mercy of fanatics is not only a frightening experience, but a frustrating one. There is a feeling of complete helplessness. The resources we use to cope with the human condition are useless. There is nothing we can do except hope their madness will not vent itself upon us. Less is more. Terrorism is more frightening than holocaust.

Paragraph 1: A new evil has arisen among us

Paragraph 2: Specific examples of this evil

Paragraph 3: Evil to which we are accustomed

Paragraph 4: Our complete vulnerability

Suggested topics: Poverty; mass starvation; illiteracy

Making Memories

When I was young, my father took me to see the Scranton Red Sox play baseball, to watch the fights at Town Hall, to see the Scranton Miners play basketball, to see Ringling Brothers' Circus. He was a busy man, but he took time, as he said, "to make memories."

As I grew older and had my own family, I realized what he meant. He may not have been able to express it in philosophical terms, but he was saying we live life in the past. And if we live it in the past, then we have to have good memories to shore us up against the trials of the present.

Perhaps it's the reason I love to travel. To hear a foreign language, to see different architecture, to taste exotic food, to smell the countrysides, to touch strange things. To record and to remember. To do things I've never done before. To make memories so that when I get too old to travel, I can have wondrous memories from my days as a young man.

Paragraph 1. Recollection of the past

Paragraph 2. Meaning of the past

Paragraph 3. Effects of the past

Suggested topic: Summertime

Selling Arms

Since World War II, which was supposed to be the war to end all wars, there have been so many conflicts throughout the world that one cannot number them. It is difficult to look at a map of “third-world” countries and find a peaceful spot.

The nations of the world decry war. At the United Nations, the Secretary General does what he can to settle differences that arise in one country after another. Every one of the world’s great leaders makes pleas for peace in our time.

They speak out of both sides of their mouth, however, for at the same moment they speak noble sentiments about the blessings of peace, they give approval to sell planes and tanks and rockets and rifles to third world countries which are at war.

Selling arms is good for a country’s balance of trade. If one country refuses to sell arms, another will, and so it’s a matter of expediency to do so. If western nations do not sell arms to the side that is pro-west, then Communist or Islamic insurgents will take over the country.

But is it moral? Is it right to provide weapons that maim and kill? Is it conscientious to foment civil strife? Does the loss of money justify all things? Or does a nation have a conscience? Is it naïve to expect that one’s own country would stand aloof and abhor the designation of “arms merchant”? What is the answer?

Paragraph 1. The world at war

Paragraph 2. Attempts at peace

Paragraph 3. Hypocrisy of world leaders

Paragraph 4. Why nations sell arms

Paragraph 5. Questioning the morality of selling arms

Suggested topics: Drugs; alcohol

Assignments on editing writing

1. Punctuate the following

Whenever there is a question of proper punctuation most people consider such detail as irrelevant if one can think of a group of words phrases and clauses as a riot however then he or she sees the necessity of bringing order to such a chaotic situation the very purpose of writing is to give form to uninformed matter some people call this art while other say it helps to make sense out of mere words not only is it a way of structuring language into meaningful ideas but it is also a method of organizing the language into a pleasing rhythm students who write without careful attention to punctuation are guilty of allowing unrestrained words to run wild on a sheet of paper without proper regulation there is no magic formula to insure proper punctuation one must therefore memorize the rules a few helpful rules are place a comma after an introductory phrase or clause place a comma before and after an appositive or parenthetical remark and never separate two independent clauses only by a comma remember help bring order into the world use punctuation if you do this you can feel sure that when it's your turn to go you can stand tall be proud and walk straight in a person's life it is not often given that he or she is called upon to serve to do something important for the benefit of a lost perplexed humankind now that the clarion call has been sent forth gird yourself with rules to answer in the name of the King's English this I beseech you

2. Make sentences from the “fragments.”

Wang Lung, born a humble farmer. Rejecting the notion that he would remain a peasant of scant resources throughout his life. So determined was Wang as a young man. That he toiled in his fields from dawn to dusk hoping to increase the yield of his crop in order to raise capital and purchase more land. His goal—to increase his acreage. Until the meager parcel of land inherited from his father equaled the most vast land in the region. The House of Hwang. For Wang having great pride in social status which could be enhanced by land and wealth.

As the enterprising and industrious Wang acquired a fortune. His insatiable pride, nevertheless, rendering him intolerant of his wife Olan's modest features and peasant simplicity. Led by this inflated self image and a social precedent. A mistress named Lotus moving into his house.

Toward the end of his life, and realizing the satisfaction achieved through his fortune was short-lived: his family members bickered with one another. His sons: restless and mischievous. His wife and father, dying with despair over his taking of a mistress. Thus, the zealous pride that drove Wang to great wealth, proving to be rank pride that spawned dissatisfaction, conflict, and despair.

3. Structure the following simple sentences into a mature style by combining and rearranging them.

1. Henry Fleming was a soldier in the Union Army.

2. He fought in the battle of Vicksburg in the Civil War.

3. He was the protagonist of *The Red Badge of Courage*.

4. He ran from the front lines during his first skirmish.

5. He fled through the thick woods.

6. He hid in the forest for awhile.

7. He rejoined his outfit.

8. He fought with great courage during the next battle.

9. He picked up the flag when the man carrying it and leading the charge was shot.

10. He led his platoon against the Confederates.

11. His commanding officer told him that he was brave.

12. He thought of himself as a hero.

4. Rewrite the following paragraph in both a logical and chronological order. Use more than one paragraph if necessary.

Because Manuel's parents thought Santiago had bad luck, they would not let the boy go fishing with him. The old man set out in the boat by himself. Manuel helped him get all his gear into the boat, and he brought him something to eat. As if fishing were a religious ritual, the old man went through a series of precise details in baiting and lowering his lines, each of them at a different depth. To beat off the sharks was an impossible task, but the old man never stopped trying. Once Santiago had hooked the great marlin, every nerve and muscle in his body was strained almost beyond endurance. The tourists who saw the skeleton of the fish did not appreciate the unbelievable courage of which the skeleton was a symbol. Time after time, with every weapon at his command, Santiago struck at the sharks. After he had reached the shore, the fish nothing but a skeleton, he stumbled, weary, along the beach to his small room. There he lay, dreaming of lions. Once the old man hooked the great fish, he wished that Manuel were with him to help him and to keep him company. The old man fell many times under the weight of the mast as he made his way to the cottage. At times during the struggle with the marlin, the old man talked to the fish as if it were a person.

5. Rewrite the following paragraph, which is not well written, and also use the past tense while re-writing.

It's a long time since I read the novel, *How Green was my Valley*, but one of the things I remember is how much it may have seemed like it can be set in Scranton. All the action is in a coal mining town, and it seems that the miners are like the ones my grandfather uses in telling me about Scranton. One of the funny things I remember is that miners in a bar spit in their beer when they are going to the men's room so that no one drinks it on them. Then there is the hard life, I remember his saying, because the wages aren't good and the miners have to buy things at a company owned grocery store in the town. If they are going to have to buy there all the time, they pay higher prices than they pay in other stores, and they can end up owing more than their paycheck for the week. It's dangerous down in the mines, he says, because every miner knows there are so many deaths each year. Each man keeps asking, like no one has heard the question before, "Is it me this next time or is it someone else?" They are some of the stories that come to my mind when I am reading *How Green was my Valley*.

6. Paragraph and punctuate the imagined dialogue between Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn.

I don't know why you're making up so many fanciful stories Huck said. It's because I have a vivid imagination Tom said pointing his index finger at his head. But there's enough interesting things to do without having to think we're ambushed by Arabs Huck said. Life is kind of boring Tom said and so I try to keep everyone interested by thinking up new things to do. Like Mr. Mark Twain said there's more ways to skin a polecat than by polling the cats Huck said. It's people like me Tom said who try to make things interesting for other people who don't know how to keep themselves from being bored. Like I said Huck said you keep getting us into bad spots like when Injun Joe almost got us. All Injun Joe ever said was I'm going to get you Tom said and that was no reason for our getting lost in any cave. Yeah but to pretend you're dead and come to your own funeral and see everyone in tears is weird Huck said. I agree Tom said. Sure you do Huck said. I'm not kidding Tom said. Good Huck said. As for the next adventure Tom said I think....

7. Critique and Rewrite

Tom Sawyer is the all American boy who is supposed to be the model for all romantic boys of anyplace anywhere. People get the biggest kick out of Tom getting all of his friends to paint the fence for him and how smart he was for doing this. He was a natural leader of the gang and that was because he has the greatest and wildest imagination of any hero in all-American literature. Any time there is a moment when there's not something doing Tom is making up one new adventure after another. Whatever there is about life that can be attractive or funny it only needs Tom there and he'll make some kind of game or other that they can play. Sometimes we can think he might be too bossy and pushing everyone around so that they all have to do what he wants them to do. Excepting for Tom no one much gets to do what they want to do since Tom and his imagination are thinking things up always that he figures are fun things to do. Most people really like Tom Sawyer who read the book, and they like to think he's smarter by a great deal than Huck who leads the gang.

8. Punctuate and paragraph the following

Graham Greene who converted to Catholicism at twenty two years of age offers a fascinating portrayal of martyrdom in his novel *The Power and the Glory* the story is set in the Tabasco Province of Mexico during the 1930s when Catholic clergy were beset with a wave of persecution instigated by the government the protagonist is a priest who is a fugitive of the law the antagonist is a lieutenant who represents and espouses the secular values of the government believing in a materialistic solution to the impoverished plight of the Mexican masses the lieutenant is intent on executing every last priest in his province in his mind clerics have done nothing but exacerbate the poverty of Mexico “no more money for saying prayers and for building places to say prayers in. We’ll give people food instead teach them to read give them books We’ll see they don’t suffer” the priest however maintains that the spiritual needs of the people have to be fulfilled through sacraments and worship the priest is in conflict not only with the law but also with his conscience his glaring faults make him feel “he is going to God empty handed” for he has fathered a child he drinks uncontrollably and he has allowed zealous pride to sour his priesthood nevertheless the priest demonstrates remarkable strength as well for never does he renounce his faith in God and devotion to the Church after dragging himself through the jungles of Mexico he knowingly and willingly turns from the brink of freedom into the hands of the merciless lieutenant in order to administer the sacrament of reconciliation to a man a dying thief deciding to return to the thief when faced with this final dilemma convinces most readers of the power and the glory of God in choosing to make whomever he will saints

9. Critique and Rewrite

In *The Old Man and the Sea* there is a struggle which was taking place between Santiago the fisherman and the large marlin which was hooked. In many ways the struggle is a very literal struggle that goes on in each one's life when a man is testing himself for courage. Santiago is that man and stands for all men. Despite all his great effort the sharks attack his fish. He beat them off. They keep coming back. Though Santiago kills a lot they keep at the big marlin until there is not any flesh left only a skeleton. When the boat comes back to the shore some tourists look at the skeleton of the fish and think that it was a shark. They are outsiders in the world that knows the old man and the boy and the other fishermen who know what a tremendous struggle and what great courage it took to land such a fish. They only see what it was. They do not know that it represents something other than what it appears to be on the surface of things. "Courage is grace under pressure," said Hemingway. And this is what the old man is a graceful man with courage.

10. Critique and Rewrite

I went into the room, in front of me, which was a large room. Hanging, behind the closed door, on a hook, was a large pillow case, that was white, and was filled with dirty clothes. It was rather suspicious, to say the least, the whole thing that is. What struck me first of all, was that the pillow case was so full, when supposedly it was said, that they were there one night only. How could they use so many things, where there was so little time to use them in? The bed was still not slept in, since the spread was still pulled up. There was pajamas in the pillow case, and because the bed was made, they wouldn't have used any pajamas. I looked through all the clothes, in the pillow case, hanging on the hook. What I found, except for the pajamas, was not really enough to clue me in. But then, there, at the bottom of the pillow case, staining the bottom really, was the weapon that someone must have used, in the murder of the two of them. It was a gruesome thing. The bodies, propped in the chair, weren't nice to look at, and the knife had serrated edges, so you could see why they didn't look too nice.

11. The following paragraph is written in abstract language. Rewrite it, using concrete details.

To her dismay, a person will often discover that her endeavors are not successful despite the most diligent effort on her part to achieve a particular goal. It is understandable that she might become discouraged under such circumstances, watching at times the success of others who have neither worked so tirelessly nor struggled so courageously. Sages might console her with reminders that it is not so important that she succeeds as it is that she uses the talent God has given her, and that her efforts, not her victories, are what matter. Such advice is small comfort to anyone who has failed, however, and such words are futile in assuaging the pain of failure. Perhaps it would be a far better approach to encourage a person who has failed to carry on her efforts despite repeated disappointments because persistence and perseverance often lead to success. Unless there is incontrovertible proof to the contrary, a person should never despair of achieving what she has set as a goal.

12. The following paragraph is verbose. Reduce it to at least two thirds of its present number of words.

The Old Man and the Sea is a very interesting work that I have enjoyed more than any other novel that I can think of that I have ever read. It was a real exciting fishing story about this old man who went out into the ocean to fish. He was all alone because he hadn't caught many fish lately, and the parents of Manuel, the boy who usually went fishing with the old man, wouldn't let him go this time because the old man was unlucky. Manuel's parents wanted him to fish with a fisherman who was lucky at fishing. Once the old man was far out where he thought the big fish would be, he let down several lines at different depths in the ocean and he baited each of the hooks carefully so that they were all covered up with the bait and the fish couldn't see the hooks. The big fish were smart and if they saw the hook they would know enough not to take the bait because it was a trap. After awhile a big fish, which turned out to be a marlin, took one of the lines and was hooked. The fish was so strong, however, that it was able to pull the whole boat of the old man for miles through the ocean and even farther out from the land. It was really a great battle that took place between the old man and the marlin, but the old man finally caught the fish and lashed him to the side of his boat. But then the sharks came to eat the marlin. The old man fought them off for awhile, but eventually they ate the whole fish and left it nothing but a skeleton.

The following are examples of writing that span two thousand years. When you examine them, you will see aspects of writing that you find in the cores

Example 1: *2 Corinthians*, c. 4, verse 7, ff.

But we carry this treasure in vessels of clay,
to show that the abundance of the power is God's
and not ours.

In all things we suffer tribulation...

but we are not distressed:
we are sore pressed, but, we are not destitute;
we endure persecution, but we are not forsaken;
we are cast down, but we do not perish,
always bearing about in our body the dying of
Jesus, SO THAT

the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our
mortal flesh

FOR we know that he who raised up Jesus
will raise up us also with Jesus....

WHEREFORE we do not lose heart.

ON THE CONTRARY....

Even though our outer man is decaying....

yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.

FOR we know that if the earthly house in which we dwell
be destroyed,

we have a building from God,
a house not made by human hands,
eternal in the heavens.

Example 2: *I Corinthians*, c. 13, verse 1, ff.

And I point out to you a yet more excellent way. (General statement)

(Conditional, “if” clauses)

**If I should speak with the tongues of men and of angels,
but do not have charity,**

(Result) I have become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.

And if I have prophecy and know all mysteries and all knowledge,

**And if I have all faith so as to remove mountains,
yet do not have charity,**

(Result) I am nothing.

(Definition in negative and positive terms)

CHARITY is patient....is kind...

CHARITY is not envious, is not pretentious, is not puffed up,

is not ambitious, is not self seeking, is not provoked...

**thinks no evil, rejoices not over wickedness, but
rejoices with the truth...**

**bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things,
endures all things.**

CHARITY never fails...

whereas prophecies will disappear,

and tongues will cease,

and knowledge will be destroyed...

FOR we know in part...and we prophecy in part..

BUT when that which is perfect has come.

That which is imperfect will be done away with....

(Example) WHEN I was a child, I spoke as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child...

NOW that I have become a man, I have put away the things of a child....

(Concrete imagery) We see now as through a glass darkly...but then face to face

(Abstract) Now I know in part....

but then I shall know even as I have been known...

(Conclusion) SO there remain these three...faith, hope, and charity....

BUT the greatest of these is charity.

Example 3: *John*, chapter 1, verse 5, line 1, ff.

The following passage, the beginning of the gospel according to John, is an example of the use of abstract expression which writing is foreign to the concrete poetic language of the Hebrews. It was thought, therefore, that the gospel was influenced by Greek philosophical thinking. The author uses the word *logos*, which means “word.” (In English, *logos* has come to mean study of: e.g. biology, theology, ontology, etc.) (Later discovery of the scrolls from the Qumran community would call into dispute the Greek influence.)

In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.
He was in the beginning with God.
All things were made through him,
and without him was made nothing that has been made.
In him was life,
and the life was the light of men.
And the light shone in the darkness,
and the darkness grasped it not.
He was in the world,
and the world was made by him,
and the world knew him not.
But to as many as received him he gave the power
of becoming sons of God....
To those who believe in his name....
Who were born
not of blood,
nor of the will of the flesh,
nor of the will of man,
but of God.

And the word was made flesh and dwelt among us.
And we saw his glory...glory as of the only
begotten of the Father....full of grace and truth.

Example 4: *Song of Songs*, chapter 2, verse 8, ff.

In contrast to Example 3, the following pericope of the *Song of Songs* is written in Hebrew and the language is filled with imagery. The *Song of Songs* is a love song between a male and a female.

**(F) Hark! My love...here he comes
springing across the mountains,
leaping across the hills.
My lover is like a gazelle or a young stag.
Here he stands behind our wall,
gazing through the windows,
peering through the lattice.
My lover speaks.....he says to me....**

**(M) Arise....my beloved....my beautiful one...and
come...**

**For see...
the winter is past....
the rains are over and gone.
the flowers appear on the earth....
the time of pruning the vines has come...
the song of the dove is heard in our land...
the fig tree puts forth its figs...
and the vines, in bloom, give forth fragrance.**

Arise....my beloved...my beautiful one...and come

**Oh my dove in the clefts of the rock,
in the sweet recesses of the rock,
let me see you...
let me hear your voice....
for your voice is sweet...
and you are lovely.**

**(F) Catch us the foxes,
the little foxes that damage the vineyards...
for the vineyards are in bloom!**

**My lover belongs to me and I to him....he browses
among the lilies....**

**until the day breathes cool...
and the shadows lengthen....**

**Roam, my lover, like a gazelle
or a young stag
upon the mountains of Bether.**

Example 5. General Douglas MacArthur's final speech to the Corps at West Point.

If one looks at the imagery of Example 4, a passage that was written about 580 B.C., then one can see how the same approach, the use of imagery and figures of speech, makes this one of the great oratorical triumphs of the 20th century.

“Duty, Honor, Country” (motto of the Academy)

The shadows are lengthening for me. The twilight is here. My days of old have vanished, tone and tint; they have gone glimmering through the dreams of things that were. Their memory is one of wondrous beauty, watered by tears, and coaxed and caressed by the smiles of yesterday. I listen vainly, but with thirsty ear, for the witching melody of faint bugles blowing reveille, of far drums beating the long roll. In my dreams I hear again the crash of guns, the rattle of musketry, the strange mournful mutter of the battlefield. But in the evening of my memory, I always come back to West Point. Always there echoes and re-echoes in my ears---Duty, Honor, Country. Today marks my final roll call with you. But I want you to know that when I cross the river, my last conscious thoughts will be of the Corps: and the Corps; and the Corps. I bid you farewell.

Example 6: John F. Kennedy's Inaugural Address

If one examines the stylistic devices used in examples 1 and 2, both written in the first century A.D., then she can see how much President Kennedy used this style in his inaugural address, parts of which are written below.

Delivered January 20th, 1961

We observe today, not a victory of party, but a celebration of freedom—symbolizing an end as well as a beginning—signifying renewal as well as change. For I have sworn before you and Almighty God the same solemn oath our forebears prescribed nearly a century and three quarters ago.

We dare not forget that we are the heirs of that first revolution. Let the word go forth from this time and place, to friend and foe alike, that the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans—born in this century, tempered by war, disciplined by a hard and bitter peace, proud of our ancient heritage—and unwilling to witness or permit the slow undoing of those human rights to which this nation has always been committed, and to which we are committed today at home and around the world.

So let us begin anew—remembering on both sides that civility is not a sign of weakness, and sincerity is always subject to proof. Let us never negotiate out of fear, but let us never fear to negotiate.

Let both sides explore what problems unite us instead of belaboring those problems which divide us.

Let both sides, for the first time, formulate serious and precise proposals for the inspection and control of arms—and bring the absolute power to destroy other nations under the absolute control of all nations.

Let both sides seek to invoke the wonders of science instead of its terrors. Together let us explore the stars, conquer the deserts, eradicate disease, tap the ocean depths, and encourage the arts and commerce.

All this will not be finished in the first 100 days. Nor will it be finished in the first 1,000 days, nor in the life of this administration, nor even perhaps in our lifetime on this planet. But let us begin.

Now the trumpet summons us again—not as a call to bear arms, though arms we need—not as a call to battle, though embattled we are—but a call to bear the burden of a long twilight struggle, year in and year out, “rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation”—a struggle against the common enemies of mankind: tyranny, poverty, disease, and war itself.

The energy, the faith, the devotion we bring to this endeavor will light our country and all who serve it—and the glow from that fire can truly light the world.

And so, my fellow Americans—ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country.

Finally, whether you are citizens of America or citizens of the world, ask of us here the same high standards of strength and sacrifice which we ask of you. With a good conscience our only sure reward, with history the final judge of our deeds, let us go forth to lead the land we love, asking His blessing and His help, but knowing that here on earth God’s work must truly be our own.

Example 1: Cores 1 to 5

Heathcliff, Where Have All the Flowers Gone?

In Heathcliff's dream of seeking vengeance on Hindley, he is destroying whatever capacity he may have had for loving anyone in this world. (Core 1: Several introductory prepositional phrases) Because of his hatred, Heathcliff makes his life's goal to purchase Wuthering Heights a symbol for his withered capacity to find love and for his shrunken soul to find grace. (Core 2: Parallel structure in the phrase of apposition) Not only do the machinations of Heathcliff manage to inflict pain upon most of the other characters, but they also serve as a reflection of the way in which Heathcliff has stained his own soul with the sordid hands of an evil monster. (Core 3: Correlatives) The tenacity in his pursuit of Hindley, the cruelty in his marriage to Isabella Linton, the perversion in his love for Catherine are examples of the blight which has fastened itself upon the mind and soul of Heathcliff. (Core 4: Accumulation of subjects) Such is the madness of Heathcliff, the outsider, in a world which responds only to love. (Core 5: Inversion of the predicate)

“Greater Love than This....”

Beowulf, who attempts to defend his people from the jaws of Grendel and bring them to a world in which goodness and nobility prevail over evil, is an epic hero. (Core 6: Non-restrictive clause) Whenever his people are endangered, Beowulf refuses to surrender to fear, and he dons the armor of righteousness against the dragon of evil. (Core 7: Introductory adverbial clause followed by two independent clauses) The more determined Beowulf’s effort to rescue his people from impending doom, the more intense is Grendel’s effort to slaughter the warriors and consume their flesh. (Core 8: Correlatives) There is a constant comparison in the reader’s mind between the Christ figure of Beowulf which one recognizes in his risking his life for his people and the satanic figure of Grendel which one recognizes in his gory destruction of the warriors. (Core 9: Adjectival clauses modifying the objects of a preposition) Despite the power of the monster, Beowulf slays Grendel as he does Grendel’s mother, dedicated to and content with his commitment to lay down his life that others may find safety from all harm. (Core 10: Two adjectives modifying the subject of the independent clause)

“The Last Shall be First....”

Frustrated by the circumstances of poverty in which he finds himself and embarrassed by the commonness of his brother-in-law, Pip slips further and further into an arrogant, haughty manner which makes him contemptible. (Core 11: Introductory past participial adjectival phrases) Like Miss Havisham, like Estelle, like Pumblechook, Pip’s relationship with other people is twisted because he does not understand that love is unselfish, that love does not use others, and that love does not amount to emotional greed. (Core 12: Three comparisons to other people introduced by the same preposition) Because Pip is confronted by Magwitch, who has not and does not and will not exploit love, he is humbled and enlightened, and through clasping Magwitch’s hand as he lies dying, Pip begins to love someone. (Core 13: Introductory adverbial clause, followed by a relative, non-restrictive clause which has three auxiliary verbs) Pip, a young boy finding no human affection from his sister and reaching for human worth in the perverted mind of Miss Havisham, is victimized and betrayed. (Core 14: two present participial adjectival phrases modifying the appositive “boy”) What Pip realizes at last is that the special social status of people is not half so important as how they treat one another, namely as ends and not as means. (Core 15: Noun clause as the subject of the sentence)

**“Who loved the Pilgrimage more than You?”
from a poem on Chaucer by J.D. Ayd, S.J.**

Humorous and wise, light-hearted and profound, *The Canterbury Tales* is a story of human foibles and nobility, a microcosm of the human condition. (Core 16: Four adjectives modifying the subject and preceding it) Each one of the tales scores a telling point about the nature of man: the foolishness of a cuckold whose vanity blinds him—the nobility of a knight whose love demands extraordinary sacrifice. (Core 17: Double appositive with the object of the preposition “about”) On their pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Thomas a Becket, each one telling two tales, the pilgrims reveal much about their own personalities and their philosophies of life. (Core 18: Series of introductory adjectival phrases) *The Nun’s Priest’s Tale* provides insight into prejudice against the Jews in medieval times, and *The Pardoner’s Prologue* reveals abuses in selling indulgences. (Core 19: Two independent clauses) Pettiness, greed, self-sacrifice, lust, love: such is the stuff of which man is made. (Core 20: Individual nouns as subjects of the sentence)

Make of them Sybarites.

“Who, by God, am I supposed to be?”

Colm Wilkinson sings in a song from the album, *Jekyll and Hyde*. (Core 21: Quotation) **To effect the community of man, the loss of individual identity, and the stability of society** is the purpose of the Central London Hatchery and Conditioning Center. (Core 22: Infinitive phrase, governing multiple objects, as the subject of the sentence) The Bokanovsky Process is **pragmatic, ingenious, enterprising, efficient, and successful** since it can produce ninety-six identical twins from a single fertilized egg, thus ensuring maximum conformity to the proscriptions of this brave new world. (Core 23: Multiple predicate adjectives) As in **Sodom and Gomorrah**, casual promiscuity and the denigration of all conjugal affection hold sway, and fleeting sexual encounters are encouraged by society because they involve no dangerous passions such as love. (Core 24: Biblical allusion) **Take note** of the libertine attitude of the rulers and **understand** the reason behind their actions, realizing they can subjugate man by catering to his sybaritic desires. (Core 25: Use of two imperatives)

“Who Knows what Evil Lurks in the Hearts of Men?”

“Man is innately depraved,” Jonathon Edwards writes in his sermon, *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*. (Core 21: Quotation) To explore the heart of man, the effect of a primitive society on his behavior, the danger of his omnipotence over other people, is the purpose of this novel. (Core 22: Infinitive, with multiple objects, as the subject of the sentence.) Kurtz is educated, civilized, diligent, competent, and rational when he makes his way into the heart of the jungle, loving his fiancée who awaits his return so they may marry. (Core 23: Multiple predicate adjectives) The jungle of the natives is more evil than Sodom and Gomorrah, however, and Kurtz is not able to resist the temptation to resort to savagery, a rejection of every civilized instinct from his past. (Core 24: Biblical allusion) Look deep into the plight of Kurtz and realize the degradation to which every man may sink, reverting to his baser instincts in which his actions are informed only by what pleases him. (Core 25: Use of two imperatives)

“For Thine is the Kingdom....”

A person is often chosen for martyrdom or sainthood even though he may seem to be an unlikely candidate. (Core 26: General statement begun impersonally) From his indulging his weakness for whiskey to satisfying his fleshly appetites with Maria, the priest demonstrates that he is a man lacking restraint. (Core 27: Noun clause as object of the sentence) Knowing himself to be pursued by the lieutenant, the priest tries to escape from Mexico to a safe city, but he is captured because he chooses to administer the sacraments to a man in need. (Core 28: Present participial phrase modifying the subject) It terrorizes him, the thought of death by a firing squad, and yet he refuses to deny his God or his priesthood in order to save himself. (Core 29: Use of a pronoun as subject, and then the subject for which it stands) By showing us that God has chosen so weak a priest to be a martyr, Graham Greene presents us with both a paradox and a truism that to God alone belong the power and the glory. (Core 30: Gerund phrase governing a noun clause)

Cherchez la femme!

And it came to pass (In the beginning, And God said; And there went forth a decree; And God blessed them saying; And the Lord God formed man) that Adam and Eve had two children, Cain and Abel, and Cain was envious of Abel and slew him, and from that moment on, the world knew the crime of murder. (Core 31: Biblical style) Lady Macbeth is not a woman who will allow her husband only to wish for power, but rather she is determined that nothing will stand in the way of his becoming King. (Core 32: First independent clause negative, second affirmative) Fearing Macbeth's nature is soft like a young child's, to spur on his ambition, she invokes the gods that they might unsex her to strip her of any tender feminine feelings and make her cruel and remorseless. (Core 33: Introductory adjectival phrase with a simile) When Macbeth falters in his resolve to kill Duncan, she excoriates her husband for his timidity, for his lack of resolution, and for his dearth of courage. (Core 34: Accumulation of phrases after the main clause) In her mind, devoid of any pity or compassion, there unfold the drunken chamberlains, the bloody murder of Duncan, and the blood smeared on the grooms. (Core 35: Inversion of many subjects)

“Star-Crossed Lovers”

In the beginning, (And it came to pass; And God said; And there went forth a decree; And God blessed them, saying; And the Lord God formed man) God created them male and female and gave them to one another as helpmates, and from that moment on, many men and women have loved one another with great passion. (Core 31: Biblical style) Romeo and Juliet are not lovers who will allow a family feud to interfere with their love, but rather they are determined that nothing will stand in the way of their being together. (Core 32: First independent clause negative; second independent clause affirmative) 32. Praising her face and hair and eyes in poetry as one might hear in Paradise, Romeo becomes more and more obsessed with his Juliet. (core 33: Introductory adjectival phrase with a simile) He is destroyed, therefore, when he finds her in the tomb with her face ashen, with her lips colorless, and with her body rigid. (Core 34: Accumulation of phrases after the main clause) In his agony over the loss of his wondrous wife, there sweep across his mind the poisonous feud of the Capulets and Montagues, the emptiness of life without Juliet, and the black abyss of despair. (Core 35: Inversion of multiple subjects)

“Those whom the gods would destroy.....”

Having killed Duncan and having plotted the murder of Banquo, Macbeth believes the prophecy of the witches is fulfilled in his becoming King. (Core 36: Two participial adjectival phrases modifying the subject) In analyzing Macbeth, therefore, one comes to realize that he has been caught in the web of the witches’ prophecy, ensnared by what appears to be a perfect escape from the weaving of fate. (Core 37: Development by metaphor) Unless Birnam wood moves to Dunsinane and unless he meets an opponent who is not born of a woman, Macbeth believes he is invincible, and, therefore, he fights with fearless disregard for the prowess of any of his opponents. (Core 38: Conditional clauses) It is not that Macbeth believes he is immortal, for he realizes that time destroys even the most noble of men, but that he is a man on whom the gods have set their seal of approval and whom they have destined for honor. (Core 39: Use of correlatives) To preserve his tainted crown is the object of Macbeth’s unfaltering struggle, and, though hounded and besieged on all sides, he fights until he is killed and decapitated by Macduff, a man not born of woman. (Core 40: Infinitive phrase as subject of the sentence)

“O brave new world that has such people in it.”

From Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*

Two conditions are mandatory for a modern state to control its people; it must provide titillating pleasures to seduce its citizens, and it must convince them to eschew problems by using drugs like soma. (Core 41: Use of a colon to detail the general statement) The U.S. is a society which has allowed pornography to permeate its entertainment and which has been unable to control the widespread use of drugs. (Core 42: Two relative adjectival clauses after the main clause) In a country in which misogyny is fostered in lyrics and photographs, sexual aberrations are the subject of movies, and cocaine is the drug of choice, can civility and gentility ever become the norm which society nurtures? (Core 43: Interrogative sentence) In our permissive country, where many parents threaten to institute a law suit against anyone who tries to discipline their children, they have undermined authority by supporting their children when they err. (Core 44: Relative adjectival clause modifying the object of a prepositional phrase) Even our proud heritage will be unable to save us from becoming another Roman Empire. (Core 45: Use of allusion)

The Future is Past.

Two requisites are necessary for a totalitarian state to survive; it must use physical violence to accomplish its ends, and it must persuade its citizens to turn against one another. (Core 41: Use of a colon to detail the general statement) Winston Smith is an average man who defies the orders of Big Brother and who decides to join a revolution against him. (Core 42: Two relative clauses after the main clause) In a world in which history is changed to suit the needs of the government, each citizen is watched on a telescreen, and Thought Police are everywhere, can a man like Winston Smith defy the system with success? (Core 43: Interrogative sentence) At the Ministry of Love, where Winston Smith is beaten and tortured, the Thought Police destroy his will and his self-respect by forcing him to turn against Julia. (Core 44: Relative adjectival phrase modifying the object of a prepositional phrase) Even his great love for her can not match the insidious torture of a Machiavelli. (Core 45: Use of allusion)

“Mirror, mirror, on the wall.....”

Dorian Gray, the handsome young protagonist of the novel and a rich man, is one of the most decadent characters in the history of the novel. (Core 46: Phrases in apposition with the subject of the sentence) His vanity is boundless. His prurience is revolting. His debauchery is outlandish. His deeds are feculent. (Core 47: Series of short sentences) His changing portrait is a mirror of his lascivious deeds, and his fascination with his portrait is the narcissus of his timely death. (Core 48: Two independent clauses using metaphors) Although the cynical Lord Wotton by his charming banter seduces the young man, Dorian is responsible for his own wanton acts of self-indulgence, cruelty, and blackmail. (Core 49: Concessive clause) In a final frenzy of despair, Dorian is revolted at his even more hideous likeness in the portrait, and with a knife he slashes its hypocritical smirking, its blood-stained hand, and its contorted face. (Core 50: Three objects of the verb)

Stephen Dedalus, Superstar

Stephen Dedalus, the hero of *Portrait of an Artist* and himself an aspiring artist, is one of the most intelligent and inquisitive young men in the history of the novel. (Core 46: Phrases in apposition with the subject of the sentence) His imagination is boundless. His reasoning is incisive. His dialogue is sharp. His learning is impressive. (Core 47: Series of short sentences) The perspicacity of his intellect makes dim the light of his fellow students, and the acuity of his speech makes sluggish the stream of their dialogue. (Core 48: Two independent clauses using metaphors) Although they may cast a few pebbles at the throne from which he reigns, they defer to him and stand in awe of his immense talent. (Core 49: Concessive clause) From so lofty a perch, Stephen finds himself worthy of such accolades, and he bestows on his fellow students a patronizing glance, a condescending smile, and a superior manner. (Core 50: Three objects of the verb)

You Can't Find What Isn't There.

There is no perfect race of men, no delightful paradise, no righteous society of rational citizens, no utopia that Gulliver discovers in all his travels. (Core 51: Inverted accumulation of subjects) This fictitious travelogue follows Gulliver from the time of his medical practice in London to his sea voyages, in his encounters with the Lilliputians, with the Brobdingnagions, and with the Houhnhnms. (Core 52: Use of three balanced prepositional phrases) How he reacts to all these situations and how they affect him are the structure and plot of the work. (Core 53: Two noun clauses as subjects of the sentence) One must realize, therefore, that this is a work of satire and that it is Gulliver's disgust with the human race and his subsequent misanthropic attitude which is its subject. (Core 54: Two noun clauses as objects of the verb) Understanding the disillusionment of Gulliver with the pettiness and selfishness of men, which depress him, is to understand this bitter attack on humanity by Jonathan Swift. (Core 55: Gerund phrase as subject of the sentence)

Design of *Portrait of the Artist*

There is no typical plot-like structure, no bold action, no chain-like series of events, no conflict that demands resolution in the form that Joyce has used in writing his novel. (Core 51: Inverted accumulation of subjects) Following the emotional and intellectual response of Stephen Dedalus to his world, which is the only action of the novel, is a difficult task for the reader. (Core 52: Gerund phrase as subject of the sentence) One must realize, therefore, that this is a novel of interior action and that it is Stephen's reaction to his world and his search to find himself in it which is the subject of the novel. (Core 53: Two noun clauses as objects of the verb) The novel follows Stephen from the time he is a baby until he is a college student, in his relationships with his family, with his church, and with his country. (Core 54: Use of three balanced prepositional phrases) How he reacts to all these influences and how they affect him are the proper matter and form of the novel. (Core 55: Two noun clauses as subjects of the sentence)

“Somewhere over the Rainbow...”

Cynicism is the loss of hope in mankind, that moment in an idealist's life when he becomes disillusioned because all the noble goals he has envisioned for mankind don't materialize. (Core 56: Sentence of definition) Lemuel Gulliver is so upset with the disgusting race of Yahoos, so depressed over being exiled from the society of Houyhnhms, and so embittered over the petty intrigues of the Lilliputians, that he becomes a cynical man. (Core 57: Sentence of result) Gulliver does have a right to this draught of bitterness since these experiences have had such an adverse effect on his life. (Core 58: Sentence of cause) If the major goal in a person's life is to achieve wisdom, however, and if Gulliver wishes to acquire this virtue, he must realize that accepting the limitations of one's humanity is a necessary step in the process. (Core 59: Conditional sentence) Unlike Marlow in *The Heart of Darkness*, who copes with the evil in the world and does not allow it to overwhelm him, Gulliver assumes a posture of pride and superiority and thus becomes an image of all that he hates. (Core 60: Sentence of contrast)

Grow up, Stephen Dedalus.

Maturity is the accepting of responsibility for one's own self, that moment in a person's life when he ceases to blame his family, his church, or his country for the person he is. (Core 56: Sentence of definition) Stephen Dedalus is so ashamed of his family and especially his father, so angry at the shabby manner in which Ireland has treated its artists, and so embittered over the narrow despotism of the Church's hierarchy that he feels justified in his superior attitude toward all three of them. (Core 57: Sentence of Result) Stephen does have a right to a draught of bitterness since these influences have had an adverse effect on his life. (Core 58: Sentence of cause) If the major goal in a person's life is to reach maturity, however, and if Stephen Dedalus wishes to achieve it, he must say at some moment in his life that he assumes responsibility for himself. (Core 59: Conditional Sentence) Unlike Huck Finn, who copes with the evil in the world and does not allow it to overwhelm him, Stephen assumes a posture of intellectual superiority as his defense and thus becomes an image of all that he hates. (Core 60: Sentence of contrast)

Death

Death is what makes life exciting. It moves us to accomplish things. It makes time precious. It puts an edge on life.

If there were endless years in which to reach the goals we set for ourselves, most of us would procrastinate until our motivation to achieve was dormant. There are few of us who can work without the consciousness that the clock is racing and that we must hurry because our lives are running down.

Just the very idea that each day may be the same is abhorrent to us because we seek variety in our lives in order not to be bored. But we can have variety only if things change, and if things change, death is inevitable.

Death is the exhilaration we feel in flying, mountain climbing, parachuting, orbiting earth, and any other daring feats. Without its presence, everything we do would be banal, and nothing would be dangerous or heroic. The very expression “death-defying,” is used to introduce acts that risk life.

If there comes a time when death is defeated, none of us will have children because the drive and the need to immortalize ourselves will be lost. It will be a very sad world indeed in which nothing grows and in which all of us are depressed because there can be no hope in a changeless, deathless world.

- Para 1. Topic, theme of the Essay
- Para 2. We need motivation.
- Para 3. We hate boredom.
- Para 4. Death gives an edge to life.
- Para 5. Without death, we'd be sad.

Suggested topics: Suffering, Pain, Sickness, Handicaps

Letter to the Admissions Office at Harvard

Dear Sir:

I would like to say that my father is an alumnus of Harvard and that I want to follow in his footsteps, but he was graduated from Bucknell. I would like to say that all my life I have dreamed of erudite professors in Harvard Square discussing esoteric topics as if they were modern Socrates, but I haven't. I would like to say that I am president of the student body, the captain of the basketball team, a varsity member of the debating team, an eagle scout, a black belt in karate, and a concert pianist, but I'm not.

I'm nobody special. I am near the top of my class, but I've had to study more than anyone else in the school to get there. I am on the basketball team, but I never get in a game unless our team is ahead by twenty points. I tried out for the debating team, but I made only the jayvee team. In reality, I've tried out for everything in high school, but I've never been the best at anything.

So the reason I want to attend Harvard is that for one time in my life, I want to be somebody, and if you want to be somebody in these United States, the only University to attend is Harvard. And besides all this, I think that Harvard needs hardworking, mediocre people like me because we're the ones who end up running the country. This is your chance to accept a future famous person.

Sincerely,

Suggested topic: Letter seeking admission to a University

Altruism

If there is nothing in life worth dying for, there is nothing in life worth living for. A hero confirms that life is significant.

Why does a person lay down his life for someone else? What is it that prompts man to set aside the strongest instinct he has—self preservation?

It is easy to understand a parent's sacrificing his life for his child. Nor is there any problem in comprehending the heroism of men whose duty it is to protect a head of state. What is perplexing, however, is the gratuitous act of generosity, the spontaneous gesture of choosing to die in place of a mere acquaintance or even a stranger.

A man passes a saving line from a helicopter to five other people in a freezing river, knowing that he'll drown before the chopper returns for him. A woman jumps onto a subway track and lifts a child to safety and is run over by the subway train. A soldier throws his body over a live grenade which explodes in his belly.

Perhaps there are some in whom altruism is more developed than in others. Or it may be that Christ's example has inspired a host of people who would imitate him. Then again there may be those who could not live with the guilt of having preserved themselves while watching another die.

Whatever the reasons may be for acts of ultimate courage, they restore our faith in the goodness of people and show us the nobility of which individuals are capable.

Para 1. Taking a stand on a philosophical question

Para 2. Why do people practice this virtue?

Para 3. Examples in which altruism is easily understood

Para 4. Examples in which altruism is not understood

Para 5. Speculation on people's motives

Para 6. Conclusion

Suggested topics: Becoming a parent; sanctity.

Renewing the Draft

There is irony in asking you to make this sacrifice. I am an old man, bent and broken, ravaged by time. I could not mount the barricades with you even if I forged my will to spur on this battered body which has been crushed on the field of battle. Time is tolling its bells for me.

Yet in my memory a flag flies in the languid breeze, unfurled to the wind. It hovers over us with stars that urge us to dream dreams of glory, with stripes to make us remember that we must be scourged before we can be crowned.

There are rumblings among even men of good will that I would turn our land into an armed camp, that I would place a sentinel on every corner, that I would erect barbed-wire along our shores, that I would fill the skies with birds of prey. It is the same old cry of those who would be free without paying the price for freedom.

I ask of you no more than millions of Americans have given in the cause of freedom. I ask that as the enemy stalks us, we be vigilant. I ask that as he fixes his bayonet, we hold our shield at the ready. I ask that as he breaks toward our lines, we form a solid phalanx against him.

It is not easy to ask you to shed your blood. Every man wants to live a life without pain and to walk with ease in the sunset of his days. And yet some generations of Americans are called to sacrifice these dreams upon the altar of the bloody god of war. Some men must die that others may live.

And so tonight I propose we begin a draft of young men who will be trained in the science of war. The swollen belly of the god who lurks in our land will claim his victims from among us. But there is a higher cause, a more noble calling that demands our goals be set aside so that our children may live in freedom in the land we love.

It is to preserve our dreams that I sound a clarion call to arms.

You must rise up and do battle with those who would enslave us. Your generation has been called. Your generation must answer that call, or this nation will perish.

Note: In this essay, which is really a speech, the author is trying to convince young men and women of the necessity of having a draft in this country. The speaker faces a difficult audience because he is calling upon them to make a sacrifice, and making a sacrifice is antithetical to human nature. It means that we must forget about ourselves and think of others, often others who have not as yet been born. When we ask of someone that he lay down his life, we are asking the ultimate sacrifice that anyone has to offer. In order to achieve this, we have to make these young people feel there is a higher goal in life than striving for their own personal happiness.

Note the rhythm of the language, the use of imagery, the sounds created by using euphony and cacophony. Realize the vocabulary is mainly Anglo-Saxon because words derived from the Anglo-Saxon are shorter and more powerful than those derived from Latin and the Romance languages.

Love and Marriage

Since the national divorce rate is flirting with the forty percent mark, it is time to look at the institution of matrimony. Why do a man and a woman marry? Sex? Procreation? Companionship? And why do so many couples separate and divorce? What is it that propels two people to take one another “until death do us part,” and then to toss aside their vows as if they never meant them?

To say that being in love is a sufficient reason for marriage is to be guilty of naiveté. We do not “fall in love” anymore than we “fall in hate.” Love is an active verb, not a passive one. It is not something that happens to us. It is something we choose to happen.

Love is choosing to commit ourselves. It is an act of the will, not some fleeting emotional spasm. It has nothing to do with how we feel at any given moment because it is a fixed choice that transcends time.

We do not choose to love under certain optimum conditions, but in all circumstances whether they are fortunate or tragic, and we do not choose to love only if our spouse reciprocates that love at each moment of the day.

The poet William Carlos Williams writes, “we have/no matter how/by our wills survived/to keep the jeweled prize/always/at our fingertips./We will it so/and so it is/past all accident.”

An increasing number of marriages today are accidents that resemble costume jewelry rather than a prize jewel because many couples no longer will to stay married.

Para 1. Reasons to write about the subject

Para 2. What love does not mean

Para 3 and 4. What love does mean

Para 5. Quote from a poet to support the theme

Para 6. Use of metaphor from quote as conclusion

Topics: Loyalty; friendship; vocation

Goodbye, Mister President.

No man has been our president for so long a time. I do not hesitate to say that no man will ever again be our president for so many years. Men like Franklin Delano Roosevelt pass this way but once.

Through the dark days of the depression, when desperate men were haunted and hungry, and through the terrible times of World War II when the enemy pushed us back toward the brink of peril, his patrician voice told us, “we have nothing to fear, but fear itself.” We sat by our radios and we warmed to his soothing, calm manner, a father assuring his children lest they be afraid of the dark.

The ship of state still sails in troubled waters. The sun has flickered through the clouds on gloomy days, but we have not yet bathed in its light without fear it will be blotted from our eyes. And the voice that has called us to battle has died, leaving us bereft as orphans.

Yet somehow we are sure he will be with us through the storm clouds that threaten us, that his fatherly voice will whisper in our ears and show us the way and the light, that he will guide us and guard us until we are safe at home.

May we love him and honor him and thank God for having sent him to us, and may he receive all the good things that heaven has in store for those who have served their country well.

Note: Since most churches permit laypeople to give a eulogy for a deceased person, it is possible that you may be called upon to deliver a eulogy. The word eulogy comes from two Greek words: *eu* meaning good; and *logos* meaning word. The obvious purpose of a eulogy is to say something good to those who mourn the person who has died. Praise the deceased, but avoid maudlin expressions and melodrama which will make it sound like a “an afternoon soap opera.”

Art

Art is the imposition of form on life. Life is flux, change, formlessness. Art is stasis. It is that moment when the movement of the world is fixed by the artist who gives it a pattern, and art is then, unlike life, immutable. The artist has given a moment of time permanence for the ages. Although art may imitate life, and on rare occasions, life may even imitate art, life and art are dichotomous in nature.

If the world were perfect, there would be no art. There will be none in heaven. The essence of imperfection is change, and it is because the world changes that art is possible, for art makes perfect the imperfection it seizes upon.

The essence of art is form. It is not what the artist writes or sculpts or paints that is art, but the way in which he does it. As far as the subject matter of art is concerned, our unique world in its coming and goings, it has been substantially the same throughout the ages. What is different, however, is the consciousness of the individual artist, the unique strokes by which he imposes his vision on undifferentiated matter.

As long as the world is moving and changing, there will be art. There will be artists who will want to stop the seeds of destruction that are inherent in the things of this world and immortalize them.

Para 1. The inherent difference between two things

Para 2. Art can exist only in an imperfect world.

Para 3. The essence of art

Para 4. Conclusion

Topics: Optimism vs pessimism; restraint vs indulgence

Civility, an External Sign

It is the custom of older people to become nostalgic about the noble aura of their youth and to condemn the morals and manners of the present generation. Having admitted this, I continue to yearn for some things lost in my distant past.

I remember our freshman professor of English at Prep teaching us how to introduce our date at a dance to faculty members, how to comport ourselves with a young lady, and how to dress like a gentleman. He was a man of breeding, of gentility, of manners.

In the 1960s manners became egregious, civility became superfluous, and dress became eclectic. The aristocracy of breeding and impeccable manners turned into the anarchy of erratic behavior, disheveled clothing, and putrid bodies. Every person was reduced to the least common denominator. Though the present generation has been less blatant in its disdain for cleanliness and grooming, good manners are a lost art.

Once students respected age, position, and learning. Today the lowliest among them slams through doors, squats in the middle of steps, and clogs up corridors so a teacher must tread his way through a labyrinth of potential danger.

It is difficult to proselytize and garner neophytes among barbarians. Grace builds on nature. Civility is the outward sign of inward grace.

Para 1. Yield a point

Para 2. Specific example of something good

Para 3. General examples of things that were bad

Para 4. The present problem

Para 5. The consequence of the present problem

Topics: A touch of class, it shows; graciousness, the elegance of life; taste, clothing makes the woman/man

Joshua

In the book of *Exodus*, Joshua is chosen by the Lord God of Israel to succeed Moses and lead the chosen people into the Promised Land. In my own circumscribed life, Joshua was my dog, the son of Shamu and Lady Sapphire. He was a Doberman.

Lady Sapphire had a difficult pregnancy, and Joshua was a breach-birth-baby. He was, therefore, deprived of oxygen for a period of time sufficient to damage his brain. In other words, he was stupid.

As a result of his mental mediocrity, Joshua was never what one might call house-broken. Some parents deal with children who have similar problems by putting them on the toilet many times each day until they make the connection between place, position, and function.

With consistency, therefore, I put Joshua out into his enclosed yard many times each day no matter what the weather. One sub-zero winter night, after he had been out for a minute or so, I heard his whining grow more shrill. I dashed out into the yard to see what had happened to him.

I had enclosed his private yard with a chain-link fence. As he had lifted his leg and urinated, the urine hit one of the links in the fence and froze on impact. Like a statue, his right leg lifted to perform his appointed task, he was glued to the fence, attached by a frozen stream of urine. I ran into the house, grabbed my axe, ran outside, and chopped him loose. We were both relieved, as the cliché goes, in more ways than one.

Note: There are so many ways to achieve humor that a single example will give but a limited insight. One may tell a tall tale, write about eccentric people, tell about weird family traditions. The topics are endless.

The Good Life

A woman who devotes herself to the poor is described throughout the world as a saint. A self made multi-millionaire who has servants and yachts and magnificent houses is the embodiment of the American Dream. Rock stars and movie stars who live exciting lives are idolized by millions of their fans.

From the time of Socrates and his peripatetic school of philosophy, people have pondered the question: "In what does the good life consist?" Socrates tells us that it lies in leading the virtuous life. An old song suggests that it consists in doing it "my way." Some people say the good life is a life that is lived for others.

Everyone does seem to agree on one point, however, that for the good life, success is of prime importance. But the answer presents us with as many problems as it solves because the question arises: "What is success?" Money? Sanctity? Fame? Power? Prestige? Education? Children? Marriage?

Although I am no more certain than anyone else, I believe the good life is a life in which we are content and at peace with ourselves. We will know it if our bodies don't rebel with psychosomatic illness and if our minds aren't flooded with constant anxiety. The good life is the life that's good for us, and by these two signs, contentment and peace, we will know when we are leading it.

Para 1. Three example of what might be the "good life"

Para 2. The eternal question and some theories

Para 3. An answer that raises more questions

Para 4. The essayist has only a personal answer to the question

Topics: Career; Happiness; Accomplishment; Vocation

Principles

Principles are the rules we live by. They are not imposed on us by some authority outside ourselves. They are what we have decided will govern our actions.

A principle is a line beyond which we will not go. It sets up boundaries. And the stance we take is not an emotional decision, but a reasoned weighing of options.

Principles imply choice. We must be able to act this way or that way, and such choice implies responsibility. For what we choose, we must give an accounting, if not always to others, then at all times to ourselves.

If we are faithful to our principles, perhaps we will not know worldly success, for principles do not carry with them a badge of public achievement. We will, however, be women and men of integrity, a virtue which offers no other reward than itself.

Shakespeare wrote: "To thine own self be true/and it must follow as the night the day/thou canst not then be false to any man."

Para 1 and 2. Definition

Para 3. What principles mean to us

Para 4. What rewards we may or may not receive

Para 5. Quotation from literature to support our position

Topics: Politics; goals; laws

A Student

Throughout the long years of my teaching career, it seems that she and I have been looking for each other. There have been several times when we have met, but the encounter has been all too brief and her name escapes me. I can describe her, however, so that if you chance to meet her, you will recognize her.

She has a voracious appetite for knowledge, and never once have I seen her without a book in her hands. She reads all the time, selectively, but incessantly. And since learning and comprehension are like the revelation of a mystery, her mind never stops questioning and evaluating whatever I teach her. At no time will she allow me to continue with a lecture if she has failed to understand so much as a word of what I am saying. She is a greedy person.

This intellectual dialogue we carry on is something like a tennis match in which neither one of us wants to hit the ball so hard that a decisive stroke will end the volley. The object for each of us is neither to win nor to feel superior, but to thrill one another with the joy of the match.

I miss the game, so if you find her out there, tell her I'm looking for her.

Para 1. General description of longing for the "great student"

Para 2. Specific examples of what she is like

Para 3. Use of metaphor to reinforce the theme

Para 4. Conclusion

Topics: A wise person; a person of peace; a philosopher; a teacher; a person who is imperturbable

Example I Cores 1 to 5

Holden, You Gotta Go with the Flow.

In Holden's dream of becoming the catcher in the rye, he is creating, on an unconscious level, the ultimate fantasy symbol of his inability to cope with the evil in his world. (Core 1: Two introductory prepositional phrases) As catcher in the rye, Holden would make it his responsibility to prevent children from falling off the cliff, a symbol for becoming an adult and hence for becoming capable of evil. (Core 2: Parallel structure in the phrase of apposition) Not only does the image of catching the children serve as an effective mirror of the theme, but it also serves as an image of the ineffectual way in which Holden attempts to cope with the sordid reality of a sinful world. (Core 3: Correlative words) The fixity in the death of his brother Allie, the permanence of the exhibits in the Museum of Natural History, the perpetual virginity of young girls—all are example of the stasis with which Holden would endow his world were he its creator. (Core 4: Accumulation of subjects) Such is the plight of Holden, the idealist, in a world which refuses to stand still. (Core 5: Inversion of the subject)

You can't stop a boy on a white charger, Phoebe.

Phoebe Caulfield is a realist, who attempts to woo her brother back from his world of illusion to a world in which good exists side by side with evil. (Core 6: Independent clause followed by a non-restrictive clause) Whenever Holden comes to her for help, she refuses to sympathize with his disillusionment, and she badgers him to surrender the white horse of his romanticism. (Core 7: Introductory adverbial clause followed by two independent clauses) Although Phoebe's efforts at rescuing Holden from impending doom are heroic, Holden's monomania to place her on a pedestal and worship at her shrine is too extreme for her to save him. (Core 8: Concessive clause) There is an inverse relationship between the intensity which people exert on Holden's behalf to rescue him and between the determination which Holden exercises to place himself beyond the pale of mere human redemption. (Core 9: Inverted predicate and the objects of a prepositional phrase modified by adjectival clauses) Despite the concentrated efforts of Phoebe, Holden eludes her as he does everyone else, absorbed in and content with his sister-saint as she rides a carousel which by its nature moves not forward, but in a circle. (Core 10: Two adjectives modifying the subject of the independent clause)

“Let Him Who is not Guilty, Holden....”

Tormented by his inability to preserve innocence in the world and fragmented by his responsibility to become an adult, Holden Caulfield slips further and further into an obsessive, compulsive neurosis which requires his being hospitalized. (Core 11: Introductory adjectival phrases, past participles) Like Hamlet, like Quentin Compson, like Brutus, Holden is defeated because he is unable to accept that people are flawed, that they are not noble at all times, nor are they always able to be normal. (Core 12: Three allusions to other literary figures introduced by the same preposition) Since Holden is confronted by people who do not or will not or can not conform to his norms, he is disappointed and depressed, and through the symbolic image of going west, he resolves to withdraw from the world. (Core 13: Introductory adverbial clause followed by a relative clause with a triple auxiliary verb) Holden is immature and insecure, a young boy grasping the passive sinlessness of childhood rather than reaching for the tainted nobility of adulthood. (Core 14: Simple sentence, followed by two participial phrases modifying the word in apposition with the subject) What he fails to realize is that the short burst of virtue, the noble martyrdom for some cause, is not half so saintly as the long road of endurance, the humble commitment to a cause. (Core 15: Noun clause as subject of the sentence)

“Life’s but a walking shadow....”

From *Macbeth*

Quentin Compson, a neurotic young man, in his first year at Harvard, and a victim of his inability to accept evil in his world, is one of literature’s best examples of an obsessive, compulsive personality. (Core 16: Two phrases in apposition with the subject of the sentence) He twists the hands off his watch. He walks in and out of his shadow all day. He buys flat-irons to make his body sink in the river. He insists he committed incest with his sister. (Core 17: Series of short sentences) The theme of Caddy’s loss of virginity plays on his mind like a recurrent motif in a symphony, and his father’s naturalistic philosophy snaps his mind like the strings of a warped violin. (Core 18: Two independent clauses using similes) Although Quentin may be very intelligent and perceptive, his failure to accept the human failings of his sister and the tainted nature of all men drive him to suicide. (Core 19: Concessive clause) Faced with his father’s statement that time will erase even such horrible pain as Quentin feels, he decides to escape the flow of time, the evanescence of shadows, and the transience of grief. (Core 20: Three-fold object of the verb)

**“This was the noblest Roman of them all.”
Anthony’s eulogy on Brutus**

Ike McCaslin, a neophyte in the wilderness novitiate of Sam Fathers, and later a mature disciple of his father and uncle, is one of the most noble and principled men in all of Faulkner’s many novels. (Core 16: Two noun phrases in apposition with the subject of the sentence) His moral judgments are clear. His sense of justice is acute. His convictions are strong. His attempts at reparation are admirable. (Core 17: Series of short sentences) The horror at his grandfather’s incest makes dim the light of his heritage, and Carother’s cynical acknowledgment in his will of paternity blackens the brightness of Ike’s ancestry. (Core 18: Two independent clauses using figurative language) Although Ike may understand his grandfather’s loneliness in the big house, there is nothing that can justify such inordinate lust and such contempt for other human beings. (Core 19: Concessive clause) After months of agonizing over the diary, Ike rejects the inheritance from his grandfather, and he commits himself to an attitude of righteousness, a concern for justice, and a life of integrity. (Core 20: Three-fold object of the verb)

“Shall I, at least, set my lands in order?”

From *The Wasteland* by T.S. Eliot

There is no set of values, no ethical principles, no standard of morality, no norm of behavior that governs the society that Nick Carraway observes in the *The Great Gatsby*. (Core 21: Inverted accumulation of subjects) Satisfying the whims and the extravagances of its inhabitants is the sole purpose of this lifestyle. (Core 22: Gerund phrase as subject of the sentence) One must realize, therefore, that this is a novel of Nick Carraway’s search for moral order, and that Nick’s reaction to such an amoral society and his attempt to transcend it form a secondary plot of the novel. (Core 23: Two noun clauses as objects of the verb) The novel follows Carraway from the time he is fascinated with the affluent society until he becomes disillusioned with its vulgarity, with its brutality, and with its venality. (Core 24: Use of three balanced prepositional phrases) How Nick is attracted to such superficiality and how he is repelled by it at last are essential parts of the moral labyrinth through which Fitzgerald leads us. (Core 25: Two noun clauses as subjects of the sentence)

“Mine eyes have seen the Glory....”

Naiveté is the state of being innocent of the reality which is our environment. (Core 26: Sentence of definition) The Joads are so ingenuous upon arriving in California and so gullible about the American ethic of hard work that they feel they can surmount any obstacles by working harder. (Core 27: Sentence of result) They fail to realize that powerful, greedy men will exploit them in order to achieve their selfish goals. (Core 28: Sentence of purpose) If a person finds he has been deceived, and if, like the Joads, his world begins to collapse around him, his idealism often gives way to cynicism. (Core 29: Conditional sentence) Unlike Prince Hamlet, King Lear, and Holden Caulfield, who, exposed to the inhumanity of men and their selfish machinations, are disillusioned, the Joads find in their own brand of socialism and religion a panacea for the ills of society. (Core 30: Sentence of contrast)

A Paradise for Two

Peaceful and serene, isolated and insulated, the raft is a Utopia for Huck and Jim, a paradise for two. (Core 31: Four introductory adjectives modifying the subject) Neither one of them can remember a time when someone has not been harassing him—Huck, the target for the Widow Douglas and his father; Jim, the whipping boy for Miss Watson. (Core 32: Double appositive with the direct object) But on the raft, floating in the middle of the wide Mississippi, protected from the “civilized” society on the land, Huck and Jim have formed a commune based on mutual respect and love. (Core 33: Series of several types of adjectival phrases preceding the subject) Huck’s excursions onto the land bring him in contact with man’s basic inhumanity to man, and it is his returning to the raft and the humanity of Jim which shores up his belief in mankind. (Core 34: Two independent clauses) Peace, companionship, tranquility, dreams, affection are the stuff of which paradises are made. (Core 35: Individual nouns as subjects)

Huck Finn, a Saint for Our Times

“A gentleman is one who never inflicts pain,” Cardinal John Henry Newman writes in his *Idea of a University*. (Core 36: Quotation) Not to inflict pain on his father, on the Duke and the Dauphin, on the Shepherdsons and the Grangerfords, on Tom Sawyer, on even one of the people who try to exploit him is an act of extraordinary virtue. (Core 37: Infinitive phrase as subject) Huck is tolerant, compassionate, sensitive, concerned, and empathetic as he makes his way through a world of charlatans, extending a healing hand that belies his youth and ennobles humankind. (Core 38: Multiple predicate adjectives) The world of Huck Finn is not so corrupt as that of Sodom and Gomorrah, but if it were, God would not have to look far to find one just man, a valid enough reason for not destroying it. (Core 39: Biblical allusion) Pour the water over his head and unveil a saint for our times, a modern Francis of Assisi, whose odyssey is a sermon on humanity in all its divine possibilities. (Core 40: Use of imperatives)

Tom Sawyer, One of the Bad Guys

A person does wrong when he or she exploits another person, and the exploitation of every person he meets is Tom Sawyer's chief pleasure in life. (Core 41: General statement begun impersonally) From the whitewashing of the fence in *Tom Sawyer* to the intricate escape devised for Jim in *The Adventures of Huck Finn*, Tom uses his friends for his own perverse amusement. (Core 42: Use of two prepositions, one of which necessitates the use of the other) Lacking even the rudiments of civilized behavior, Tom devises a humiliating plan of escape for Jim even though he is aware that Jim has been freed by Miss Watson. (Core 43: Introductory participial phrase modifying the subject, Tom) It causes Jim discomfort and pain, this plan of Tom's, and yet Tom is unable to empathize with the plight of anyone, let alone that of a black man. (Core 44: Use of a pronoun as subject, and then the noun for which it stands) Without realizing that Jim has been made a free man, Huck protests Tom's plan, but his pleas fall deaf on the ears of one so inured to anything but his own pleasure. (Core 45: Gerund phrase governing a noun clause as its object)

Hester Prynne, First in a Long Line

In the beginning, Hawthorne created Hester Prynne as isolated, alone and lonely, and from that moment on, the dominant mood of American literature has been the alienation of its hero or heroine from society. (Core 46: Biblical style) It is not the alienation of the absurdist hero who finds nothing so rational as suicide, but rather it is the alienation of the anti-hero who finds nothing so irrational as society. (Core 47: First independent clause is negative; the second affirmative) Branded by the Puritan society for adultery much as one brands a steer, Hester Prynne, rather than allow herself to be destroyed by this society, sets for herself an Emersonian course of self-reliance. (Core 48: Introductory past participial phrase with a simile) Hester rejects the theocratic society, which the Puritans have created, with its God of wrath and its merciless judgments. (Core 49: Adjectival non-restrictive clause modifying the direct object, society.) In the wake of Hester Prynne, her scarlet letter emblazoned with gold embroidery, follow Captain Ahab, Huck Finn, Isabel Archer, Jay Gatsby, Santiago, Holden Caulfield, and a host of other protagonists at odds with their society, (Core 50: Inversion of many subjects)

**Captain Ahab, Sir,
No One Hunts for White Whales anymore.**

Two requisites are necessary for a hero: his society must recognize principles of right and wrong, and its citizens must agonize over the keeping or the breaking of such principles. (Core 51: Use of colon to detail the statement) Captain Ahab sails the oceans of the earth in pursuit of a leviathan who is either the author of the evil which has “dismasted” him or who is the agent of the author, thus questioning the responsibility of God to man. (Core 52: Two relative clauses following the main clause) In today’s world, in which sin is considered a sociological phenomenon, behavior is charted by conditioned responses, and free will is set aside by sociobiology’s “survival of the genes,” can Captain Ahab’s quest be taken as serious? (Core 53: Interrogative sentence) In an inverse relationship to man’s knowledge, the accumulation of facts that has become so prodigious a task that only a computer can accomplish it, man’s passion for belief, his faith in the supernatural, has diminished. (Core 54: Noun phrase in apposition with the object of a prepositional phrase) Even a man like Ahab could not find a crew to board the Pequod and hunt the great white whale in our rational world. (Core 55: Elements in the novel used as symbols.)

**“Where have you Gone, Joe DiMaggio?”
from “Mrs. Robinson,” by Simon and Garfunkel**

Once upon a time in the twentieth century, there were men who went forth to war as if they were living in the time of the Crusades and as if courage were measured by individual jousting. (Core 56: Fairy tale beginning) It was not that they were naïve, for they were men of intelligence, but that they thought of war as an ancient rite of passage from adolescence to manhood through an encounter with death. (Core 57: Correlatives) They offered their bodies on the altar of freedom to be sanctified by the high priest of Mars, but the altar was no more than a Chicago slaughterhouse and the high priest a Prussian butcher. (Core 58: Development by metaphor) To stamp their individual heroism on the monster of modern warfare was impossible, and so disillusioned and lost, they founded their own isolated world and established their own measure of a man. (Core 59: Infinitive phrase as subject) Unless a man saw the world as chaotic and any intellectual approach to it as futile, he was doomed to frustration and despair, and his only salvation lay in a stout will and a hardy endurance. (Core 60: Conditional sentence)

Fantasy Style

Eyes right.

A long time ago in the village of Napswatch near the Swamu river in Lower Slobovia, there was born to a male and female ninnie (for so the inhabitants were called) a child by the name of Helter. Like all ninnies, Helter had two heads above his shoulders, one of which ninnies used to see in front of them and one of which they used to see behind them.

To the consternation of Helter's parents, whose surname was Skelter, the anterior head insisted on looking backward and the posterior head was determined on looking forward. The outcome of such an attitude was that the two heads pressed into one another and could see but each other and little even of that sight.

After a long two-headed deliberation on the problem by the wisest heads in the village of the ninnies, it was decided to lodge a pin in the back of each head. And so it was done.

And from that day on, the anterior head looked forward and the posterior head looked backward to see who had stuck a pin in them.

Satire

Some People are Bad People.

Joggers are bad people. Supercilious, smug, self-satisfied—there are but a few of the adjectives I associate with them. Perhaps it is their air of self righteous virtue I find offensive, the disdain of the reformed smoker for one who has not yet found the courage to quit.

The main reason I find joggers offensive, however, is that the activity exists for its own sake. I am a pragmatist, a descendant of Benjamin Franklin, and I believe that to posit a cause that will not have a beneficent effect is the apotheosis of selfishness. But joggers benefit no one except themselves. It is their lungs, their hearts, their arteries, their physical well being that motivate them, and their concern for anyone else is at best miniscule.

If I were to classify a person who jogs, I would number him or her among those humans, who, feeling themselves among the favorites of the gods, condemn those of us who have at best mortal blood flowing through our clogged arteries.

For their hubris, may each and every one of them, one classic fall day, receive a coronary surprise!

Biblical style

Hagar's Boy

And it came to pass about the fourth month that there was the kicking of life within her. Then she lifted up her eyes unto the Lord and prayed that the child might find favor in his sight, and that he might make of her son's descendants, for it would be a male child, a great people. And there appeared to her in a dream that night an angel of the Lord who said unto her: "Thy son shall be the father of a great nation, his offspring as numberless as the grains of sand on the floor of the oceans. Thus saith the Lord." And she arose the next morning and took from the flock a young lamb and sacrificed it to the Lord, saying unto him: "I will walk before thee in truth and with an upright heart, and I will do that which is pleasing in thy sight for thou hast blessed my son while he still kicks in my womb." And her sacrifice was pleasing in the sight of the Lord, and he remembered his promise unto her.

Description

The Beak

He was thin, god-awful thin, but it was the fact that he bent forward, like a comma, that made it impossible for me to be comfortable with him. His back was crooked and his head intrusive, as though he were plunging it at me and it would somehow come off and I would find myself holding it. Each time he talked with me, I tried to keep a distance between his head and myself, even to position a barrier between us, such as my desk, but it did no good. Whatever space I managed to secure between us, his head seemed to bridge it. There was, even so, a certain comfort in distance, but then, as if he sensed a diminution of power, he began to move to my side of the desk, to whatever place in which I sought refuge. Though I realized what he was trying to do, to curl me into his hollow curve and somehow make himself whole again, I seemed powerless to stop him.

Vernacular monologue

Somebody Special

So I tell him, look Jack, I don't have to take that kinda crap from you anymore. You know what I mean? I mean it's like he hasn't even heard of women's liberation. In the kitchen. That's where he thinks I belong. Barefoot and pregnant. So I tell him. Look Jack, I'm gonna take that job. I wanta have a couple bucks of my own, see. I'm not gonna be beggin you every time for money. And also, I say to him, that class at night, I'm takin it. The lady said a woman has to raise her consciousness. We gotta get out of this slave thinkin. You oughta think about it, Norma. I'm telling you for your own sake. You're gonna end up a basket case just like me, talkin baby talk all day and waitin for Joe to come home and grunt at you. It ain't right, Nora. It just ain't right. The lady said so. "Think positive," she says to me. "Get to like yourself," she says. "You're somebody special." See what I mean, Norma. She says I'm somebody special. And I'm beginnin to believe it. I really am.

The Irony of it All

It wasn't that she had not tried, she decided, for winning was all she had been trained to do. She could hear even now her father shouting to her when she was a little girl swimming with the YWCA, "Kick, kick. Try harder. Kick!"

And so she had tried harder, at everything she did, and she had won, until now. "I want a divorce," he had said. "There's someone else." But she knew there was no one else.

She was overshadowing him. That was the problem. She had been too bright, too aggressive, too successful for him, and without her realizing it, he had come to feel inferior, emasculated. Her salary was too much, she thought ruefully. Her achievements were remarkable. Her goals were ambitious.

And yet, what she had wanted to win most, a happy and fulfilling marriage, she had lost. It wasn't fair, she decided. To divorce was to lose. It wasn't fair.

Impressionistic Style

The Election

Monumental mounds of packed flesh surging and retreating and swaying in the mighty square. Lots of nuns and priests. People, grown people, waving banners. Watching the chimney. Watching for the smoke. Two hundred thousand people.

“Hey, there it is! White smoke! We have a new pope. What do you know. Us. Hey, us. We’re here. We saw it. Wait ‘til I tell them back home.”

White turns to black. The straw is wet now. Billows of black smoke belching from the belly of the stove. Can’t mistake it now.

“Damn. Just our luck. Four hours standing here and two clouds of black smoke. The lady over there. The one with the mantilla. She’s crying. Hey lady, don’t kneel down. You’ll get crushed to death. They’ll trample you and not even know it. Thank God. She’s up.

“No more votes ‘til this afternoon. Let’s get out of here. A little wine and cheese for lunch. We’re crazy spending our vacation watching for smoke. Once in a lifetime? Maybe you’re right.”

Topics: Christmas shopping; high school dance, sports event, Rock concert

Metaphorical style

“Whither thou goest....”

He had been so righteous, so filled with a sense of mission, so surfeit with his purposiveness. While others might stumble and flounder, seeking to make sense out of life, to find meaning in their struggle, Rafael had not the slightest doubt that his existence was significant, that his being was ordained, and that his life was sponsored.

Others might have to lie down in darkness, to grope through one labyrinth and then another, to whisper a thousand acts of faith, but not Rafael Galantini. He knew he had been uttered as surely as the Word of God. He knew he had been chosen as surely as the Mother of the Sorrows.

There had been no cloud covering, no fog, not even mist. There had been only bright sun, a lighted path, a clear beacon. But the sun had blinded him, the path had led him astray, and the beacon had beckoned him to self destruction.

Exhortation

“Slouching toward Bethlehem”

Time moves us inexorably to decision, to choice, to commitment. It is no longer possible to procrastinate. It is no longer noble to equivocate. The times call for good men to be great men, to be holy men, to be saints. The signs are clear. The Anti-Christ has come at the end of this second millennia. Let those of us who have busied ourselves with worldly strife look to the beast born of the whore of Babylon as it swallows up even the bowels of the earth in its rape of our land. Armageddon is at hand. Let us join with the forces of God against the army of the Anti-Christ. Let us swell the ranks of those who are fighting and bleeding and dying in the first line of battle. And let us not hesitate to pour out our blood and soak the earth, nourishing it like a gentle rain, that our children might live in peace.

Metaphorical style

With These Hands

A wall had been erected between them at an unhurried pace, one brick at a time. They had done it themselves, refusing to be hurried, using a plumb line to keep it true. Each day they had mixed their mortar to a thick pasty consistency, careful not to use too much water which would make the mortar crumble and the bricks loosen. To erect one brick at a time might seem a paltry effort, but since they were faithful to this daily task, the wall grew thick and it grew high. The mortar was mixed well, and it remained fast and fixed, and if the slightest bit squeezed out, they smoothed it back into the groove. After a labor of many years, the wall was so high they could no longer see one another.

And now that they had finished, they stood back, each on his own side, to admire it. Even though the wall was worthy of a superb craftsman, somehow they seemed to find no pride in that which their hands had wrought.

Develop the vocabulary before you begin: e.g. words that will fit the metaphor – plum line, mortar, brick, wall, trowel, etc.

Stream of consciousness

Yeah, Trojans! Fight! Fight! Fight!

Kiss daddy goodbye my child whatever you do in word or in work this day let it be a prayer for Ilium shooting snow impossible to dodge the arrows of Teucer so many so fast the bus on time shelter me to the walls of Troy good morning this morning and each and every morning brave chariot driver on to Ilium to open the gates for the horse Diomedes the two Ajaxes Odysseus filing out of its belly to murder Priam and his sons the school is near the shouts I hear they are gathering before the walls of Troy a final onslaught death to my people oh my people out of the chariot and up to the tower putting on my armor in the faculty room encouraging my warriors be brave Sarpedon Aeneas Polydamas defend the walls of Troy think of poor Andromache and little Astanyx my son my son to the top of the house to the top of the wall masochists masochists masochists all.....

“And Jesus said.....”

Poor Jesus. Of all the people who ever lived I think I feel most sorry for him. Nobody’s been quoted more than he has. There’s not a jerk in the world who couldn’t quote something he said. When people get mad, they talk about how he drove the money changers out of the temple and that makes it all right for them to get mad. When they feel charitable and do a good deed, they tell the story of the Good Samaritan. If they feel depressed and sad, they mention his agony in Gethsemane. They never seem to follow what he said. They just like to quote what he said. Sometimes I bet he wished he hadn’t said so much. That’s what happens when you talk a lot if you’re famous. He should have just done things. Then people would either have to do what he did or not do it. At least they wouldn’t be able to quote him. And if they wanted to give sermons, they’d have to make up their own.

Taking Care

It is pleasant to harbor the notion that young people are good by their very nature. We know from experience, however, that this is not true. In high school we can observe that some students victimize classmates who are vulnerable. Like turkeys in a coop, they notice someone's bleeding, and they finish her off.

Shunning another person, mocking her idiosyncrasies, banning her from social groups, telling jokes at her expense, scorning her ideas, deriding her answers in class—all these things make some students feel superior, members of an elitist coterie.

Life is not easy, and some find the human condition difficult. To add to another's burden is a blatant offense against the tolerance which each of us has a right to expect from others.

If there is any task that we are called upon to perform while we are sojourners, it is to take care of, to watch out for, to be concerned about those around us. Taking care we are sensitive to others' feelings and taking care we encourage them all the day long are noble enough deeds for the time of our lives. We have been entrusted to one another. Some of us are fragile. We must not allow breakage.

Para 1. An idea that is pleasant, but not true

Para 2. Why some students are cruel

Para 3. The unacceptability of being cruel

Para 4: What we ought to do

Topics: Keeping faith; Esteeming honor; Having courage

Commitment

Commitment is a pledge to a course of action. It is a choice, a decision to do something we are under no obligation to do.

Marriage is a commitment. Becoming a friend is a commitment. Having a child is a commitment. Embracing the priesthood is a commitment.

If we do not honor our commitments, if we say “forever” when we mean “for a time,” then our choice is determined by external factors and not convictions. Breaking commitments is a declaration that our promise has been made at a particular time under certain circumstances, but that it is not valid if conditions change.

Is it true that once we have committed ourselves there is no turning back? That a commitment to children is unconditional, but to marriage is conditional? That friendship is something we may outgrow? That the priesthood should be chosen for five years with renewable options?

Our answer is important because it confronts the question whether ethics is based on fixed dogma or changing situations.

Para 1. Definition of commitment

Para 2. Examples of commitment

Para 3. The significance of breaking commitment

Para 4. What is the answer?

Para 5. Conclusion

Topics: Perseverance; Hope; Loyalty

Poverty

Involuntary poverty is an enslavement of the human spirit. It is a form of degradation which humiliates rather than humbles. It drags people through a morass of petty insults to a cumulative lack of self-respect.

Voluntary poverty is the shunning of material wealth. It is a decision a person makes to avoid an attachment to the material things of this world. It is choosing not to possess things one may legitimately possess.

The more things a person owns in this life, the more concerns he has. If he owns a car, he worries lest it be scratched, stolen, break down, rust. If he owns a house, he worries about broken pipes, leaky roofs, chipping paint, clogged drains, dripping faucets.

If one chooses to be poor, he reduces his cares. Poverty gives a person time to devote to study, to prayer, to friends, to the things of the spirit that nourish the mind and make sensitive the soul. When a person relinquishes all worldly goods, he is free of all the anxiety he must invest to attain them and to hold on to them.

There is no one so free, so ready to move on, as the man who has no baggage to take with him.

Para 1. Definition of involuntary poverty

Para 2. Definition of voluntary poverty

Para 3. Drawbacks of possessions

Para 4. Advantages of voluntary poverty

Para 5. Conclusion

**Topics: Love (lust); Courage (recklessness);
Responsibility (irresponsibility)**

Tragedy is of the Essence.

The comic hero sins, and the audience laughs at his foibles, and the stature of man is diminished by one. The hero plays musical beds, and adultery is laughable and fidelity has lost its holiness. The comic hero stuffs himself with food and drink, becomes intoxicated and riotous, and gluttony is a staple of humor. The comic hero is a caricature—without dignity, without dimension, without grace—and comedy mocks man as he makes his way.

Hamlet, Lear, Creon, Macbeth, Oedipus, Antigone, and once again I am proud of my humanity. That a God could die for such people I can well understand because each hero at one critical moment knows that there is a good and to have done that good would have been the moral thing to do. And if man faces the divinity of his humanity at any time, it is at that moment when he is confronted with choosing not so much the noble thing to do as the right thing to do.

And so guilt is necessary for great literature, not because one thinks of life in terms of pessimism, but because guilt confirms the fact that there is a moral order in the universe, and that one's not following it is a tragedy.

If there is nothing in life worth dying for, then there can be nothing in life worth living for. And so it is of the essence of tragedy that it does not confer nobility, but assumes it.

Para 1. Comic hero degrades man

Para 2. Tragic hero ennobles man

Para 3. Necessity of guilt in literature

Para 4. Tragedy assumes man's nobility

Topics: Sinner and the saint; War and peace; Sickness and Health

Serenity

“The world is too much with us,” Shakespeare wrote. We long to escape, to get away from the frenzy of daily life, to relax, to do nothing.

Since we will be educated people and the business world is so competitive, getting away from the tension of daily existence will be a luxury for us rather than a staple of our lives. If we choose to acquire a good number of the world’s material pleasures, then we must prepare ourselves to work long hours, often under deadlines.

We may, of course, choose not to become part of this modern madness and thus achieve a serenity untested by the roar of the marketplace. The pace of modern living, however, manages to creep up on anyone who has a responsible job.

Serenity is a peace of mind we achieve by accepting our humanity. No matter how hard we work, we can accomplish only so much. No matter how brilliant we are, we will make some poor decisions. No matter how aggressive we are, we will sometimes fail. No matter how health-conscious we are, we will at times become ill. Accepting the limitations of the human condition even to the point we can laugh at ourselves is the beginning of serenity.

Para 1. Statement of the problem

Para 2. Avoiding tension is almost impossible

Para 3. We may achieve an artificial serenity

Para 4: How to achieve true serenity

Topics: Pragmatism; Realism; Idealism

Money

When we don't have money, it is soothing to recite clichés which say we are better off without it. "Money is the root of all evil." "Money doesn't bring us happiness."

There are, however, as many opposite opinions on the subject, and we can assuage any tinge of guilt we may have by quoting them. "I'd rather be unhappy with money than without it." "Money isn't everything, but it helps us to buy most everything."

Benjamin Franklin, the earliest and most influential secular philosopher in America, wrote a treatise on how to attain wealth, and he advocated that men work hard to achieve such a goal. The basic reason for his advice was that debt and poverty, in his opinion, caused people to lose their freedom and to make them slaves to their creditors.

Money does make us free. It frees us from the anxiety that we feel when we need it and don't have it. It allows us to provide our families with good medical care, with nourishing food, with a comfortable home, with attractive clothes, with fine educations, and with pleasant vacations. And having more money than we need provides us with security and peace of mind to which security leads. Money isn't everything, but it may be the next best choice.

Para 1. Soothing statements for those without money

Para 2. Statements that support those with money

Para 3. Statements about money from an authority

Para 4. Essayist's opinion

Topics: Ambition; Laziness

Education

Education is the one thing in this world which we cannot lose nor can it be taken from us.

Men have made and lost great fortunes in the financial marketplaces of the world. Devout believers in God have lost their faith. The most beautiful among us lose our physical attractiveness to the ravages of time. Our bodies are plagued with aches and pains as we grow old, and our health deteriorates.

The one thing we never lose and which we know grows stronger in time is the education we have received. We can read great books and understand their themes. We can listen to learned people and grasp their ideas. We can have erudite discussions on esoteric subjects and relish grappling with complex issues. We can comprehend our world and delight in all the satisfying and noble pleasures it offers the learned person. Neither poverty nor despair nor age can take away the fruits of knowledge once we have attained them.

Education admits us without privilege of birth, without honor of rank, without benefit of wealth to the aristocracy of the intellect, the most democratic of exclusive clubs.

Para 1. Statement of theme

Para 2. The things we can lose in this world

Para 3. The one thing we can never lose

Para 4. The signal honor of being an educated person

Topics: Faith; Hope; Charity; Self-Discipline

On Being One's Own Person

Frustrated by not having attained her goals in life or disappointed by the type person she has become, one often resorts to blaming someone or some institution for her present fate. The pain she feels is real, and the bitterness she harbors is rancid, affecting not only her attitude toward life, but often her physical well being.

If one accepts the dogmatic precepts of another as the guiding force in her life, she exposes herself to one of two outcomes. If the one advising her how to live her life is wise, then she will have acted with wisdom in following such a person's counsel. On the other hand, if the one giving the advice is wed to certain principles because they have been handed down from previous generations, then she will have acted in foolishness.

The problem, however, is that no matter how wise or how foolish the counsel may be, the result is the same. A person has handed over to another the decision for her own life. She has abdicated the responsibility so that she may be exonerated of accountability. And if she is dissatisfied with how her life has turned out, she will lash out at those whose admonitions she has in blindness or in obedience accepted.

In order to become a mature, well-balanced person, one has to make her own decisions. She should listen to the advice of others, but she should decide for herself what is the right thing to do. In life there comes a time of reckoning and soul searching, and only someone who has been her own person will come through it unscathed.

Authority versus Conscience

Since the origin of social groups, man has pondered the dichotomy that exists between the authority of the state and the rights of the individual.

Hundreds of years before Christ was born, Sophocles wrote the play *Antigone*, the classic struggle between Creon, the ruler of Thebes, who insisted the law of the land took precedence over the rights of individual citizens, and Antigone, his niece, who claimed the law of the gods and the individual's adherence to that law superseded any man-made laws.

At the Nuremberg war crimes trials in the late 1940s, those accused of crimes against humanity defended themselves by claiming they obeyed the orders of their government. In condemning them to prison or to death, the judges ruled there was a higher law to which each person owes his primary allegiance, higher than that of any government. And so they ruled that an individual must accept the consequences of not following his conscience.

And yet during the Vietnam War in the 1960s and 1970s, when young men burned their draft cards and refused to serve in what they considered an unjust war, they were arrested, tried, and imprisoned for failure to obey the United States government. Vietnam was, in the eyes of government leaders, a just war, and no individual had the right to follow the dictates of his conscience and not serve his country during that war.

Such situations present a person with a dilemma. What is an individual to do? Does might make right? Do the more powerful decide what is moral? And old problem cries for a just resolution.

Topics: Man versus Woman; Fathers versus Sons; Athletes versus Students; Young versus Old

On Being a Good Person

Some people in this world have no talent. They can neither write, nor paint, nor sculpt. They can play no musical instrument. They cannot act, nor do they have the ability to express themselves as public speakers. Neither brush, nor chisel, nor pen will ever find fruition in their hands.

That one lacks all talent, however, is no reason why he cannot be a good person. Being a good person takes no talent whatsoever. No matter how dull, no matter how banal, no matter how insipid one is, he can be a good person. It is a democratic club. Anyone can belong.

People who have talent are prone to sins of pride in their accomplishments. The artist glories in the critical acclaim for his paintings. The writer is ecstatic about the success of his new novel. The actress basks in the superlatives of the critics. The orchestra conductor is thrilled by the applause of the audience. They may go too far. Hubris may set in. Being talented is dangerous for one's soul.

People who have no talent, on the other hand, are free of such temptations. Because they contribute nothing of value to society, it, in turn, does not try to seduce them with its blandishments. They are free to grow in virtue and in grace before God and man. They are free to choose that most democratic of all vocations: being a good person.

Basic Conventions of Punctuation

A. Semi-Colon (;)

The semi-colon represents both a connection and division between independent clauses. It enables the writer to place closely related ideas in the same sentence.

1. Use the semi-colon between related independent clauses that are not joined by a conjunction.

e.g. The hot summer afternoon was over; only the sound of crickets broke the quiet of the evening.

2. Use a semi-colon between independent clauses that are joined by conjunctive adverbs such as: however, therefore, nevertheless, moreover, etc.

e.g. In some Olympic games, the North Americans have not done well; however, in 1984, they won eighty-three gold medals, eclipsing their mark of eighty set in 1904.

3. Use a semi-colon between items in a series when the items contain commas.

The three largest lakes in the world are Caspian, Russia-Iran; Superior, United States-Canada; and Victoria, Africa.

B. Colon (:)

1. Use a colon after the word “following” and similar expressions that introduce a list or series.

The dinner menu offer a choice of the following: broiled chicken, prime rib, salmon, and Bolognese pasta.

2. Use a colon after an independent clause when a subsequent clause (or phrase) explains, restates, or exemplifies the first.

Our company has a fixed policy: we will recycle any material we can.

A Shakespearean sonnet consists of four sections: three quatrains and a couplet.

3. Use a colon before a long or formal quotation.

**Article VIII of the Constitution states:
“Excessive bail shall not be required, nor
excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and
unusual punishment inflicted.”**

**4. Use a colon between the volume number and
page numbers of a publication.**

National Geographic 126: 86-88.

C. Comma (,)

**A comma is used to set off a word, phrase,
or clause from an independent clause. It regulates
the flow of a sentence and signals a slight pause to
the reader.**

Use a comma....

1. After each item in a series.

**The fruit bowl contains peaches, pears,
nectarines, and plums.**

2. To separate adjectives in a series.

They need a bright, windy day for filming.

3. Between independent clauses that are joined by co-ordinating conjunctions (e.g. and, but, for, or, nor.)

Paul plans on majoring in accounting in college, for he wants to become a Certified Public Accountant and work with his brother.

(Note: There is no comma preceding “and” because a new independent clause is not being introduced)

4. Between SHORT independent clauses.

The argument continued, tempers flared.

5. After a series of introductory prepositional phrases. A writer may use discretion, but three or more phrases demands a comma.

Along the route from the airport to City Hall, the astronauts were cheered.

In the middle of the town, there is a statue of Lincoln.

6. To set off an introductory participial phrase or a non-essential (non-restrictive) participial phrase.

Frightened by our approach, the burglar fled.

The patient, drowsy after the operation, lapsed into a deep sleep. (Non essential, non restrictive)

People weakened by a loss of blood need a transfusion. (essential, restrictive)

7. After an introductory adverbial clause.

When I brought home my report card last week, my parents were shocked.

Whenever I go to the grocery store, I buy candy for myself.

8. After introductory words like: yes, no, well, oh, and why.

Yes, he'll be at school tomorrow. No, he won't.

9. To set off words in direct address.

He is going to call, Barbara, whether you want him to or not.

10. To set off non-essential (non-restrictive) clauses. Two guidelines: 1) when the relative clause is modifying a proper noun, it is not essential; 2) when the relative clause begins with the word “that” or “which,” it is essential.

Franklin D. Roosevelt, who was elected President of the United States four times, was an avid stamp collector. (Non-essential)

Requests that are reasonable will be honored. (essential)

Our new car, which we bought in December, is a piece of junk. (Non-essential)

11. To set off words in apposition

A light sleeper, my father is the first to awake.

Thomas Powell, a law student in Washington, worked as an engineer in London.

Note: at times an appositive is essential.

The movie *Star Wars* grossed millions of dollars.

12. To set off a parenthetical expression: indeed, in my opinion, of course, nevertheless, etc.

Our prices, of course, are the lowest in town.

13. To set off dates and locations from the rest of the sentence.

I am moving to St. Louis, Missouri, to study journalism.

Graduation was held on May 15, 1982, in the Convocation Center.

NOTE: There are exceptions to any rules, but these basic rules will guide you ninety-five percent of the time.