

Sturgis Charter Public School East

English Department

Student Handbook

Welcome to your Sturgis East English class.

We hope you'll find your class interesting, informative, worthwhile, and even a little fun. In this handbook, you may discover some of your teachers' often-repeated advice about reading, writing, and speaking for various assignments, all gathered in one place.

Contents:

Courses.....	Page 2
<i>The Basics:</i>	
Literary Terms & Techniques.....	Page 3
Punctuation First Aid.....	Page 10
Essay Basics (MLA Format).....	Page 13
Color Marking a Text.....	Page 16
<i>IB Skills:</i>	
All About SCASI.....	Page 17
Individual Oral Commentary Strategies.....	Page 18
The Commentary Wheel.....	Page 19
The College Essay: Basics.....	Page 20
The College Essay: Brainstorming Topics.....	Page 21
TOK/English Connections.....	Page 24

Sturgis Charter Public School East

English Courses

English I, Grade 9, 1 Credit

This course is designed to deepen students' capacities to respond to works of literature, to analyze the ways in which writers have fulfilled their artistic intentions, and to express their responses in carefully crafted oral and written presentations. As they read a variety of genres, students will expand their awareness of literary style and will learn approaches that will make them more discerning readers and writers. As a stepping-stone to the IB program, analytical skills will be developed as students view literature with an awareness of literary elements such as theme, narrative technique, structure, and language. In addition to a variety of genres, students will also study vocabulary and grammar as well as the structure and process of good writing. Works studied may include *Romeo and Juliet*, *The House on Mango Street*, *When the Emperor Was Divine*, *Night*, *Of Mice and Men*, poetry, short stories, and other works selected by the teacher.

English II, Grade 10, 1 Credit

English II builds on the skills begun in English I, and works to ready students for the IB program. This course will develop skills in close reading, analysis, and composition. Through a study of a range of genres and authors, students will begin to move toward a greater awareness of world literature texts while embracing the habits of mind necessary to be a true "IB Learner." Students will gain increasing comprehension of genre and style as they analyze, interpret, and compare and contrast literature from different cultural and historical contexts. They will develop their critical thinking skills, write with growing proficiency, and speak with escalating confidence as they make individual as well as group presentations. In preparation for the International Baccalaureate course work, each student will prepare at least one ten minute oral presentation, as well as several written literary commentaries throughout the year. In addition, solid critical essay writing skills will be honed throughout the year. Students will also engage in outside reading, formal vocabulary and grammar study, and the elements of research. Texts studied may include *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*, *A Separate Peace*, *The Great Gatsby*, short stories and poetry by a variety of authors, *Twelfth Night* or *Macbeth*, and Vocabulary Workshop.

IB English Standard Level OR Higher Level 1, Grade 11, 1 Credit

In this course, IB assessments as well as non-IB assessments will be used, and students will learn to respond to literature orally and in writing on a personal and analytical level. Students will be taught to address the literary elements of works, to write and speak fluently, coherently, and knowledgeably, and to make personal and insightful connections with literature. Students will read the Part IV works (School's Free Choice), which may include *Slaughterhouse Five*, *A Long Way Gone*, and essays of E. B. White, or other texts selected by the teacher, works linked by their use of narrative technique or similarity of themes. Each student will give a 10-15 minute oral presentation on a topic of his or her choice based on one of the works studied. This presentation will be graded internally using an IB rubric, and it will count toward the student's overall IB grade. Students will also read the Part I works (Works in Translation), which may include *A Doll's House*, *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, and "*Rashomon*" and *Other Stories*, or other texts selected by the teacher. Students will write an essay which will be externally assessed, a 1,200-1,500 word study of one of the above works (accompanied by a reflective statement regarding in-class discussion of the work). In addition to the core curriculum, students will study literary criticism and approaches to critical reading, will do extensive formal and informal writing, and have exposure to a variety of works that are related to those in the core curriculum. This course continues as IB English Standard Level OR Higher Level 2 in the senior year.

IB English Standard Level OR Higher Level 2, Grade 12, 1 Credit

This course will continue the work begun in Grade 11, Level 1. Work in this course will continue to emphasize careful, close reading and a studied critical response to literature. Students will explore various modes of composition and oral presentation, and will hone skills in those areas. Students will read the Part II works (Detailed Study), which may include *Hamlet*, poetry, and other works selected by the teacher. Each student will complete an Individual Oral Commentary, which is a 15-minute commentary on an extract selected by the teacher from one of the works above. The commentaries are graded internally and moderated by IBO. Finally, students will read the Part III works (Literary Genres), which are works loosely linked thematically and all within the same genre. Those works may include *Sula*, "*Jump*" and *Other Stories*, and *Huckleberry Finn*, or other texts selected by the teacher. Students will be assessed with a written exam consisting of two parts: Paper 1) a commentary (close reading and analysis) on a selection that the candidate has not studied, and Paper 2) a choice of questions on the works studied in Part III. This assessment is given late in the second semester and constitutes 50% of the student's IB grade. At the Standard Level the exam periods are 1½ hours long rather than the two hours of the Higher Level.

Literary Terms & Techniques: A Glossary

Accent: See stress.

Adage: Wise saying; proverb; short, memorable saying that expresses a truth

Allegory: A story which represents an idea or belief. An **allegory** can be religious or political. An example of an **allegorical** work in English literature is *Animal Farm* by George Orwell.

Alliteration: the repetition of initial sounds in neighboring words (or the repeating of the same letter (or sound) at the beginning of words following each other immediately or at short intervals):

The moan of doves in immemorial elms,
And murmuring of innumerable bees.—Tennyson

Allusion: a brief reference to a person, event, or place, real or fictitious, or to a work of art. Casual reference to a famous historical or literary figure or event. It may be drawn from history, geography, literature, or religion. A poet might speak of *the wrath of Zeus* in a poem about her father.

Ambiguity: A word or expression which has more than one meaning. **Ambiguity** is not necessarily negative in literary criticism.

Anagnorisis: The hero's sudden awareness/discovery of a real situation and therefore the realization of things as they stood. Also, a perception that results in an insight the hero has into his/her relationship with often antagonist character's within an Aristotelian tragedy.

Analogy: A comparison of two things made to explain something unfamiliar through its similarities to something familiar, or to prove one point based on the acceptedness of another.

Anaphora: Repetition of a word, phrase, or clause at the beginning of word groups occurring one after the other.

Antagonist: A character or force against which another character struggles. (compare *protagonist*)

Antithesis: A contrast or polarity in meaning; the antithesis of something is its direct opposite

Apostrophe :A direct address to someone or something that is not present or cannot respond

Archetype: Universal symbol; characters, image, or theme that symbolically embodies universal meaning and basic human experience

Aside Words an actor speaks to the audience which other actors on the stage cannot hear. An aside serves to reveal a character's thoughts or concerns to the audience without revealing them to other characters in a play.

Ballad: A poem which tells a story, often with a strong repeated refrain.

Blank Verse: Unrhymed iambic pentameter; much of Shakespeare's plays is written in blank verse

Bombast: Inflated, pretentious speech or writing that sounds important but is mostly not

Caesura: A natural pause or break in a line of poetry, usually near the middle of the line. There is a caesura right after the question mark in the first line of this sonnet by Elizabeth Barrett Browning: "How do I love thee? Let me count the ways."

Caricature: A picture or description greatly exaggerating the peculiarities or defects of a person or thing

Catharsis: In literature and art, a purification of emotions. This effect consists in cleansing the audience of disturbing emotions, such as fear and pity, thereby releasing tension. This purgation occurs as a result of either of the following reactions: (1) Audience members resolve to avoid conflicts of the main character that arouse fear or pity or (2) audience members transfer their own pity and fear to the main character, thereby emptying themselves of these disquieting emotions. In either case, the audience members leave the theater as better persons intellectually, morally, or socially. In modern usage, catharsis may refer to any experience, real or imagined, that purges a person of negative emotions.

Character: The “person” in a work of literature.

Dynamic Shows the capacity to change

Flat/Static One-dimensional, without depth/does not change or grow

Characterization: How the author has developed the personalities of the people (or non-human characters). Methods include (1) showing the character's appearance, (2) displaying the character's actions, (3) revealing the character's thoughts, (4) letting the character speak, and (5) getting the reactions of others. Types:

Direct: Author's directly stated description of character

Indirect: Author's indirectly stated description of character through speech, thoughts, actions, and how others interact with him/her

Cliché: An idea or expression that has become tired and trite from overuse, its freshness and clarity having worn off.

Climax: The point in the plot of a story when the conflict comes to its greatest emotional intensity (and, often, action). Not to be confused with the **turning point**.

Comedy: A literary work which is intended to amuse, and which normally has a happy ending. The term is usually applied to drama, but it can also be used for other literary **kinds**. Like many literary terms, the term has its origin in ancient Greece, but Aristotle's discussion on **comedy** in his *Poetics* is believed to be missing, and one consequence of this is that the term is less rigidly defined than **tragedy**.

Comic Relief: Humor that eases tension

Conflict: The struggle in a work of literature; the opposition of forces within a story. The tension created by conflict gives rise to drama and action. The conflict tells of some type of struggle:

- Man (person or character) against man
- Man against society
- Man against his environment / nature
- Man against gods/God/Fate
- Man against himself. (This may be physical or psychological, but whatever it is, the conflict propels the story on to its final solution.)

Conflict may be *external* or *internal*:

External: Happens outside the character

Internal: Happens inside the character (character vs. himself/herself)

Connotation: The associated meanings of a word or expression (for the opposite term, see denotation). Some words have strong connotations beyond their dictionary definitions, for example: *mother*, *home*, *terrorist*.

Convention Any widely accepted literary device, style, or form.

Criticism or **literary criticism:** The evaluation of one or more literary works. The act of **criticizing** in **literary criticism** is not necessarily negative.

Denotation: The actual meaning of a word or expression.

Denouement: The final stage or unraveling of the plot; usually very brief. The tension is over and unanswered questions may be explained; aka “resolution”

Diction: a writer's choice of words, phrases, sentence structures, and figurative language, which combine to help create meaning. It may be elevated, informal, complex, lofty, idiomatic, etc. This is a word you'll be able to use in almost any commentary. The term **poetic diction** refers to the appropriate selection of words in a poem.

Didactic: Adjective describing a literary work intended to teach a lesson or a moral principle.

Drama: A literary work meant to be performed in a theatre.

Dystopia: A **utopia** gone sour, a vision of the future which is negative (usually as a warning or to teach some lesson about the present--political, social, or other aspect of life) A prominent example is George Orwell's *1984*.

Elegy: A poem which mourns the death of someone.

Ellipsis: Omission of a word or short phrase easily understood in context.

Enjambment: when the sense or meaning does not end at the ends of lines (or **stanzas**) of a poem; it carries across two (or more) lines. The opposite of this is **end-stopped** lines.

Epigram: Wise or witty saying expressing a universal truth in a few words.

Epiphany: Sudden revelation or realization of the truth

Elizabethan: The adjective refers to British literary works which were written during the era of the British monarch Queen Elizabeth I (1558-1603), including the works of William Shakespeare

Epic: A long narrative poem on a serious subject, usually centered on a heroic or supernatural person. The term is now also used for other long literary works with historical settings.

Eulogy: Speech or written work paying tribute to a person who has recently died; speech or written work praising a person (living, as well as dead), place, thing, or idea.

Euphemism: The use of a more palatable word or phrase in place of a more direct or crude one.

Exposition: The work's introduction in which background information is given for further developments (setting, situation, characters)

Fiction: Any narrative which has not actually occurred in the historical or real world, usually written in prose. Stylistically, the description or narration of fictional events usually has some noteworthy linguistic manifestations in the literary work. Fiction is often associated with the novel.

Figurative language: Language which goes beyond what is **denoted**, and has a suggestive effect on the reader. A **figure of speech** is an instance of **figurative language**.

Foil: (1) A secondary or minor character in a literary work who contrasts or clashes with the main character; (2) a secondary or minor character with personal qualities that are the opposite of, or markedly different from, those of another character. A foil sometimes resembles his or her contrasting character in many respects, but he or she is different in other respects.

Fool: Comic figure with a quick tongue who entertained, brought good luck to court, often wiser than others; "wise fool"

Foreshadowing: Presentation of an indication or suggestion of something in advance (v. to foreshadow). This can be obvious in thrillers and horror movies, but it can also be quite subtle—sometimes symbolic, for example—in literature. Someone blows out a candle in Act 1, a death follows in Act 2.

Free verse: Poetry which lacks a regular **stress** pattern and regular line lengths (and which may also be lacking in **rhyme**). Not to be confused with **blank verse** which is unrhymed iambic pentameter.

Genre: A literary form; examples of literary **genres** are comedy, tragedy, epic, and novel. **Generic** classifications may appear simple on the surface, but one faces serious practical problems when one tries to define terms such as **comedy** and **tragedy** with reference to an actual corpus of literary works. One solution is to place spatio-temporal constraints on **generic** definitions (for example, the 'early Victorian novel', or 'Wordsworth's conception of the lyric poem').

Hamartia: Character's often tragic flaw or error, often *hubris*

Heroic Couplet: Two lines of iambic pentameter that rhyme together, and contain a complete thought

Hubris: Excessive Pride (the most common kind of **hamartia**, or tragic flaw)

Hyperbole: An overstatement or exaggeration, for poetic effect or imagery

Imagery: Often taken as a synonym for figurative language, imagery evokes one or more of the senses--sight, smell, taste, etc.

Irony: an implied discrepancy (an opposite) between what is said and what is meant. It is the basis for most humor, most suspense, and most truths about life. Three types:

1. *verbal irony* is when an author or character says one thing, but means the opposite.
2. *dramatic irony* is when an audience perceives something that a character in the literature does not know; the character believes the situation is the opposite of what it is.
3. *situational irony* is a discrepancy between the expected result and actual results, when something turns out the opposite of what the character—or the reader—expects.

Juxtaposition: Side-by-side placement for comparison or contrast (v. “to juxtapose”)

Kind (or literary kind): A literary genre which has a distinctive collection of external features.

Litotes: The opposite of a hyperbole where the significance of something is understated by negating the opposite (e.g. good = not bad).

Lyric: A short non-narrative poem that has a solitary speaker, and that usually expresses a particular feeling, mood, or thought.

Metaphor: A word which does not precisely or literally refer to the entity to which it is supposed to refer.

Metaphors are sometimes thought to exist only in works of literature, but is actually prevalent in language in general. One engages in the metaphorical use of language, for instance, when one says that one is feeling “down”.

Metaphor is the comparison of two unlike things using the verb "to be" and not using *like* or *as*, as in a **simile**.

...Now the dream decays.

The props crumble. The familiar ways

Are stale with tears trodden underfoot.

The heart's flower withers at the root.

Bury it, then, in history's sterile dust.—R.S. Thomas, “Song at the Year's Turning”

Meter: The recurrence of a similar stress pattern in some or all lines of a poem

Metonymy: Something closely associated is used to represent the thing actually meant

Mise en Scène: In a stage play, the stage set (including the walls, furniture, etc.) and the arrangement of the actors; the process of arranging the set and the actors.

Modern period: The **modern age** in English literature is often taken as the period which began from the start of the First World War onwards. But the problem here is that there were works written before 1914 which displayed **modernist** tendencies, like Joseph Conrad's *Nostromo* and the late novels of Henry James. Another problem is that the **modern age** is already with us for more than three-quarters of a century, and is now longer than the Victorian age which in itself is quite a lengthy period in the history of English literature. One solution adopted by some critics is to proclaim a **post-modern age**, but what period comes after the post-**modern age** is anybody's guess. It is perhaps high time for both **modern** and post-**modern** to be rechristened, as many works belonging to both these ages are now old hat, and it may not be legitimate to describe them as '**modern**' any more. However, the **modern age** is a fruitful period as far as stylistic research is concerned, as experimentations with language are often carried out in both poetry and prose.

Moral: The lesson or teaching of a **didactic** work

Motif: An element (image, symbol, theme) which recurs in a literary work, or across literary works.

Narrator: The personage who “tells” the story in a narrative work. Like the persona, the **narrator** should **not** be confused with the author. It may also be useful for you to think about the difference between narrative, narration and the narrator

Novel: A long work of prose fiction. The **novel** as a more realistic literary genre, is sometimes distinguished in academic literary criticism from the **romance**; but this distinction is not maintained by all literary critics

Occasional poem: A poem written for a specific occasion (e.g. a birthday, a wedding etc.).

Onomatopoeia: A word or expression which resembles the sound which it represents. Examples: *splash*, *murmuring*, *moan*. Usually used to create **sound imagery**. Sometimes, however, this is more subtle than a single word:

When the train starts, and the passengers are settled
To fruit, periodicals and business letters
(And those who saw them off have left the platform)
Their faces relax from grief into relief,
To the sleepy rhythms of a hundred hours. (T.S. Eliot, “Dry Salvages”)

Can you hear the *clickety-clack* of the train in line 2? The rhythm of a train in the rest of the stanza?

Oxymoron: Compact paradox in which two successive ideas seemingly contradict each other

Parallelism: The technique of showing that words, phrases, clauses, or larger structures are comparable in content and importance by placing them side by side and making them similar in grammatical form.

Paradox: A statement or situation containing apparently contradictory or incompatible elements that is nevertheless somehow true. The “sound of silence” is a famous example.

Paraphrase: Restatement of content designing to make meaning as clear as possible

Pastoral: A literary genre. Originally a poem dealing with shepherds, a **pastoral** is usually written by an urban poet who idealizes the shepherds’ lives. The term has now been extended to include any literary work which views and idealizes the simple life from the perspective of a more complex life.

Pathos: The sense of pity or sorrow aroused by a particular element or scene in a literary work.

Persona: The unidentified personage who “speaks” (see *speaker*) in a poem or prose work. The **persona** should not be identified with the author of the work.

Personification: Human attributes given to an animal, object, concept

Plot: The arrangement of actions or events in a particular (usually narrative) work of literature.

Point of view: The perspective established by the narrator of a literary work, the “eyes” through which a story or prose piece is told. First-person and third-person are the most common types, but sometimes it’s **third-person omniscient** (presenting many characters’ thoughts/feelings) or **objective** (recording events without presenting feelings or point of view), sometimes the third person still stays in one single character’s “view” (**third-person limited**). Sometimes the point of view shifts in a work. Point of view can sometimes be a very important choice a writer has made (as, for example, presenting the stories of Sherlock Holmes from the first-person narrative voice of Dr. Watson). Can you imagine what the rare (in fiction) **second-person** point of view would be?

Protagonist (Greek/Classical Drama): Main character in an ancient Greek play who usually interacts with the chorus. In a tragedy, the protagonist is traditionally a person of exalted status—such as a king, a queen, a political leader, or a military hero—who has a character flaw (inordinate pride, for example). This character flaw causes the protagonist to make an error of judgment. Additionally, the typical protagonist experiences a moment of truth in which he or she recognizes and acknowledges his or her mistakes, failures, or sins.

Protagonist (Modern Sense); Main character(s) of a novel, play, or film, usually the character(s) with whom the audience has sympathy. (compare *antagonist*)

Pun: A word which has the same sound, but with different meanings. Here is an example from Shakespeare's *Richard III*: "Now is the winter of our discontent made glorious summer by this *son* of York" (*Son/sun*)

Rhyme: the matching of sounds in words, particularly at the ends of lines. Technically, in English, two words rhyme when their accented vowel sounds, and all following sounds, are identical. Therefore, sleeping must rhyme the *-eeping* sound. *Sleeping* rhymes with *keeping* and *seeping*, but it does not rhyme with *staying*, even though they both end with *-ing*.

- **Rhyme Scheme**—is the pattern of rhymed words at the ends of lines. A simple, common rhyme scheme is a four-line stanza of abab.
- **Internal Rhyme**—is rhyming within a line.

Then a sentimental passion of a vegetable fashion
must excite your languid spleen,
An attachment a la Plato, for a bashful young potato,
or a not-too-French French bean!—W. S. Gilbert

Romantic Age: Literary works which were mainly written between 1798 and 1932. Among the characteristics of Romantic literary works are an emphasis on the individual and on the expression of personal emotions, a tendency to explore new literary forms or new means of expression, and a highlighting of nature or the natural landscape.

Sarcasm: A sharp and often satirical or ironic utterance, sometimes with a humorous edge, sometimes designed to cut or give pain

Satire: A literary work which belittles or savagely attacks its subject. Satire ridicules human folly/vice with the intention to prevent/reform such behavior

Scan: To assign **stress** patterns to a poem.

Setting: The location or context for the writing; can be geographical, temporal, social, historical, political, religious, literary/critical, etc.

Simile: Direct comparison using *like* or *as*

Soliloquy: A speech delivered by a character in a drama, to the audience directly; usually when the character is alone on stage, but possibly other characters are on stage who do not hear the speech. In drama a **soliloquy** is used by the playwright to reveal the character's thoughts.

Speaker: The personage or persona responsible for the voice in a poem; like the **persona**, the **speaker** should not be confused with the poet.

Stereotype: Character in a literary work or film who thinks or acts according to certain unvarying patterns simply because of his or her racial, ethnic, religious, or social background. A stereotype is usually an image that society projects or imposes on every member of a group as a result of prejudice or faulty information.

Stock: Any character types that occur repeatedly in a particular literary genre so that it is recognizable as part of the conventions.

Stream of consciousness: A technique or method in **modern** narrative **fiction** which attempts to mimic rambling thought patterns of a character.

Stress (or accent): The loud "beats" in a poem; a regular pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in a poem often gives the poem its distinctive quality.

Subplot: A secondary story in a narrative. A subplot may serve as a motivating or complicating force for the main plot of the work, or it may provide emphasis for, or relief from, the main plot.

Symbol: A word or expression which signifies something other than the physical object to which it directly refers. A rose for example, may symbolize love, and the cross, Christianity.

Syntax: Arrangement in which words combine to form phrases, clauses, and sentences.

Theme: A unifying idea that recurs in literature. It can be stated in a word, or more. A theme of *Romeo and Juliet* is love. Another theme is the relationship of children to their parents. Another is the consequences of blind hatred on a community and individuals in the community.

Tone: The attitude, as it is revealed in the language of a literary work, of a personage, narrator or author, towards the other personages in the work or towards the reader.

Tragedy: A broad term, originally taken from drama; the term may refer to any work of literature which has an unhappy ending for the main **character**. The most prominent examples in English literature of **tragedy** as a literary **kind**, were found in the **Elizabethan** and **Jacobean** era, with Shakespeare being the most famous writer of **tragic** works. There have been various attempts to define **tragedy**, beginning with Aristotle's *Poetics*. Like most literary genres however, **tragedy** must frequently be re-defined when referring to individual works of literature. One is usually more successful if one defines **tragedy** in terms of certain periods of literature, or with reference to certain authors: for example **Elizabethan tragedy**, or **tragedy** in the works of Thomas Hardy.

Tragic hero: A privileged, exalted character of high repute or "high station", who, by virtue of a tragic flaw and fate, suffers a fall from glory into suffering.

Tragicomedy: A literary work which combines elements of both tragedy and comedy. **Tragicomic** plays were quite common during the **Elizabethan** and **Jacobean** periods of English literature.

Turning Point: Moment(s) in the plot of a literary work where the fate of the main character(s) takes a "turn" toward its final state. Traditionally, in a Shakespearean drama, the turning point will be in Act 3, when something happens to change the characters' fate in a decisive way--in a tragedy, from success towards failure and death.

Understatement: Less is said than what is meant, or what is said has less force than is warranted

Utopia: A literary work which describes the ideal state or way of life. The most famous example of a **Utopian** work is Thomas More's *Utopia* (from which the term is derived).

Victorian: The adjective Victorian refers to British literary works which were written, or which resemble those written during (or shortly before or after) the era of Queen Victoria (1837-1901). The adjective is also used to describe the code of morality which was believed to be predominant during her reign.

Voice: The dominating ethos or tone of a literary work. The **voice** existing in a literary work is not always identifiable with the actual views of the author.

First Aid in Punctuation

Period

After statements and commands

EXAMPLES: The theater production was considered a success.
Open the door.

After abbreviations

EXAMPLES: Mr. Jerry Smith
etc.
Mary E. Bianca, M.D.

After each number or letter symbol in an outline (as on this page)

For an ellipsis (three spaced periods) to indicate an omission of one or more words within a quoted passage
(Note: if the omission ends with a period, use four spaced periods.)

EXAMPLES: "Some books are to be tasted, others . . . swallowed, and some few . . . chewed and digested."
"The defense was the best asset of the team. . . ."

After a polite request

EXAMPLE: Will you please send me information on careers in business.

Question Mark

At the end of a direct question

EXAMPLES: Does Nancy really love Henry?
Did Pat say, "I will not go"?
Pat asked, "What time does the movie start?"

Exclamation Mark

After each word, phrase or sentence of strong emotion

EXAMPLES: Help!
That comment is absolutely insulting!

Comma

Before the coordinating conjunction which separates independent clauses in the sentence (The conjunctions are and, but, for, or, so, nor, yet.)

EXAMPLE: They tried to discourage him, but he insisted on writing to the manager.

After the introductory phrase or clause

EXAMPLE: In spite of the many customers who shopped there, the store went broke.

Before and after interrupters within the sentence

EXAMPLES: The weather, I believe, is hot in Florida. (parenthetical expression)
Mr. Smith, the foreman at the plant, was fired. (appositive)
The performance, Mary, was indeed successful. (direct address)
Mr. Gregg, dressed in a gray suit as usual, finally arrived for the dinner. (nonrestrictive modifier)

Between elements of a series (optional before the and preceding the final element)

EXAMPLES: We lost shoes, hats, dishes and books in the fire.
We lost shoes, hats, dishes, and books in the fire.

With initials, titles, dates, and addresses

EXAMPLES: Both Smith, R. D. and Jones, E. G. attended the conference.
The attending physician was John Franks, M.D.
The game will take place on December 4, 1978, at the stadium on 1224 Bleeker Street, Denver, Colorado, at 2:00 p.m.

Between quotations and the rest of the sentence

EXAMPLES: She asked, "What time does the play begin?"
"The play will start at noon," Joe replied.
"The play," Joe replied, "will begin at noon."

Between two or more adjectives when they equally modify the same noun

EXAMPLE: He wrote a logical, concise paper.

Between two contrasted elements in a sentence.

EXAMPLE: Your error is due to carelessness, not ignorance.

Between words that could otherwise be misread

EXAMPLE: Soon after, she got up and left the room.

In place of omitted words

EXAMPLE: Earlier they were rich; five years later, poor.

Semicolon

Between two closely related independent clauses (full sentences) not joined by a coordinating conjunction

EXAMPLE: The weather is a factor in ski jumping; a lack of snow could be dangerous.

Between two independent clauses joined by a conjunctive adverb or equivalent transitions such as accordingly, also, anyhow, besides, consequently, furthermore, therefore, thus, in fact, on the other hand, and equivalent phrases.

EXAMPLES: I'm sorry that I lost it; however, I'll certainly replace it.

She worked four hours to prepare the meal; then they ate it in eighteen minutes.

Between independent clauses which contain internal punctuation

EXAMPLE: The ski competition, in spite of the weather, was a smashing success; but the tennis tournament was rained out.

Between items in a series containing internal commas

EXAMPLE: The club elected Mary, president; Joe, vice president; and Fred, secretary.

Colon

After an introductory statement which shows that something is to follow

EXAMPLE: Only one course remains: to clean up the mess.

After a statement which introduces a list

EXAMPLE: The grocery list includes several items: eggs, milk, bread and oranges.

Between introductory words and a formal quotation

EXAMPLE: Thomas Jefferson makes his point in this passage: "We must . . ."

After the salutation of a business letter

EXAMPLE: Dear Sir:

Apostrophe

In possessives

EXAMPLES: doctor's orders; James' notebook (singular possessive)
doctors' orders; children's boat (plural possessive)

In place of omitted letters

EXAMPLES: don't (do not)

In the plural of numbers, letters, symbols, words being discussed as words

EXAMPLES: The serial number contained several 2's.

Uncrossed t's look like l's.

Three ±'s were written on the paper.

In his paper were three therefore's.

Quotation Marks

Around direct quotations (See Comma, IV.F.)

At the beginning of each paragraph of a multi-paragraph quotation

EXAMPLE: "To measure and mark time is no easy task because of the boredom factor which emerges
"However, the problem can be overcome with the proper training of the people involved."

For the titles of articles, essays, short stories, short poems, and song titles

EXAMPLES: The story was called "The Pit and the Pendulum."
I watched Happy Days, and Richie sang "I Found My Thrill on Blueberry Hill."

Single quotation marks for a quotation within a quotation

EXAMPLES: The coach said, "When you say, 'I'll be there on time,' I expect you to mean it."
Tom said, "Jane said, 'I will not serve on the committee.'"

Italics (and Underlining)

For titles of books, films, pamphlets, magazines, plays, operas, newspapers, ships, legal cases, L.P.'s and for scientific names of foreign derivation

EXAMPLES: Last year I read The Grapes of Wrath.
One famous legal case is Brown vs. Board of Education.

Words pointed out as words

EXAMPLE: The word Mississippi contains many duplicate letters.

Foreign words and phrases

EXAMPLE: Laissez faire is a principle of government.

Capitals

For the first word of each sentence

EXAMPLE: The bell rang.

For proper names (of people, cities, states, streets, religions, races, days, months, regions of the country, buildings, organizations, etc.)

EXAMPLE: We visited the Empire State Building last Tuesday.

For the first word of every line of most poetry

EXAMPLE: Success is counted sweetest
By those who ne'er succeed

For each important word in the title of a book, play, short story, essay, and works of art

EXAMPLE: The Return of the Native is a novel by Thomas Hardy.

Essay Writing Basics

1) Introduction and Thesis:

Structure your introduction so that you...

- start with a statement about your theme idea;
- relate that idea to the characters/situations in the novel, using the author's name and the full title at least once;
- give your thesis strongly to conclude your introduction.

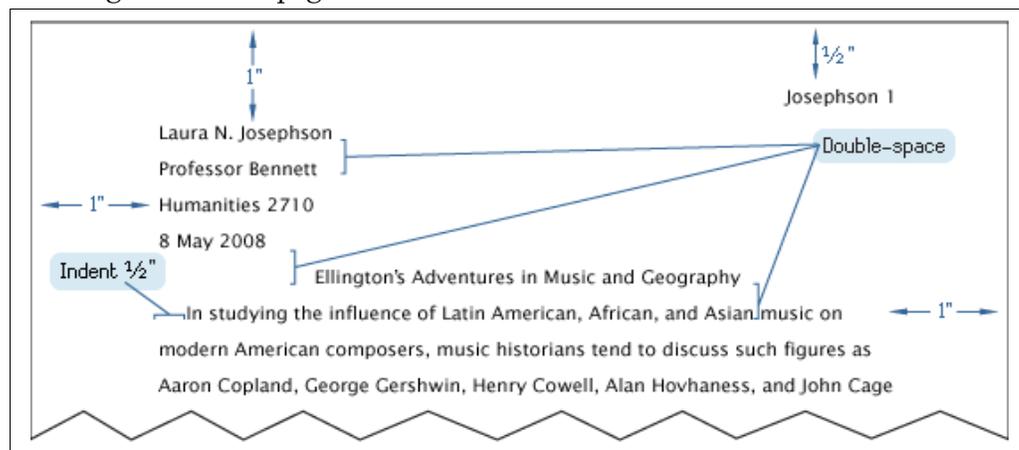
Example:

Childhood is a time of innocence and curiosity. Children view the world, including in many cases things that are deeply unfair or violent or complicated, without an adult understanding of events. Sometimes, their perspective—since it is unaware of adult realities—can lead to ignorant conclusions. Sometimes, however, a child's perspective can reveal a simpler, clearer view of a situation. This is the case with Chapter Three of Julie Otsuka's novel, *When the Emperor Was Divine*. She chose to present the heart of the novel—the family's experience in the Japanese internment camp—from the point of view of a young boy who is unaware of most of the politics and wartime realities that led to the family's being imprisoned. Because the nameless boy is so innocent, he makes the family seem innocent. Because his point of view is limited, the reader's knowledge of the prejudice and unfairness highlights an ironic contrast between what he sees and feels, and what we know to be reality. The boy's point of view provides a perfect, ironic contrast which emphasizes the author's message about prejudice, intolerance, and racism.

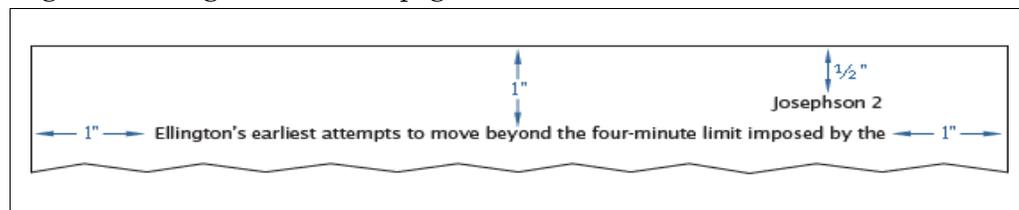
Note: A **thesis** is a statement of opinion, an opinion about the literature, the opinion you will then spend the rest of your essay proving. On a test, it may be the answer to the test question. For a research paper, it may be your theory or idea about the topic, the answer your research has led to.

2) MLA Formatting and Margins:

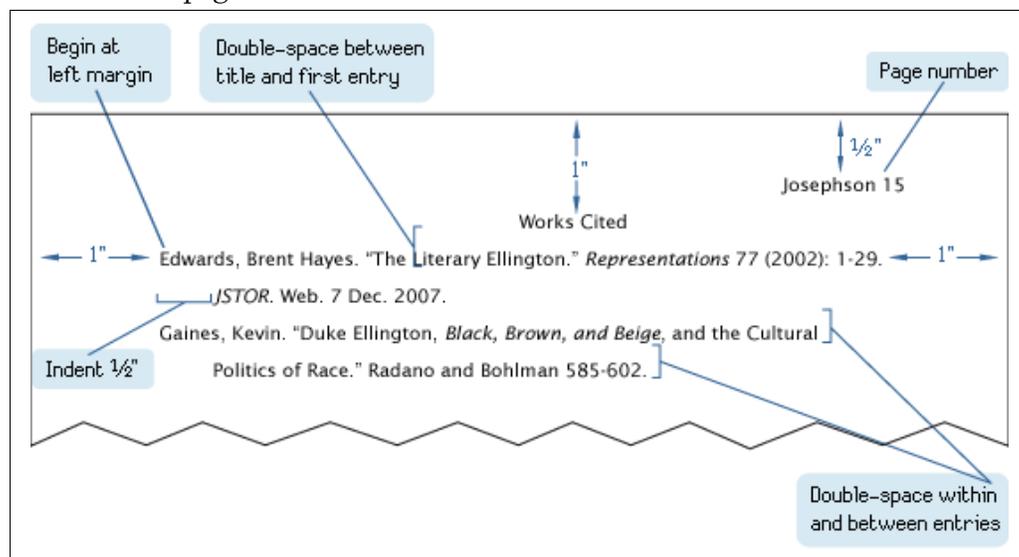
Heading on the first page:



Page numbering after the first page:



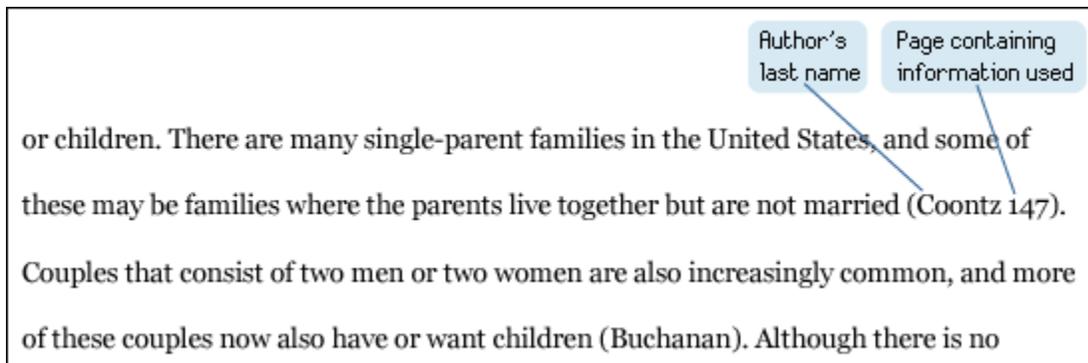
Works Cited page:



3) Citing References in Research Papers (MLA Format):

If you do not cite your sources in the text, even when you've put the information in your own words, it's plagiarism—and that's cheating.

What it looks like in the text:

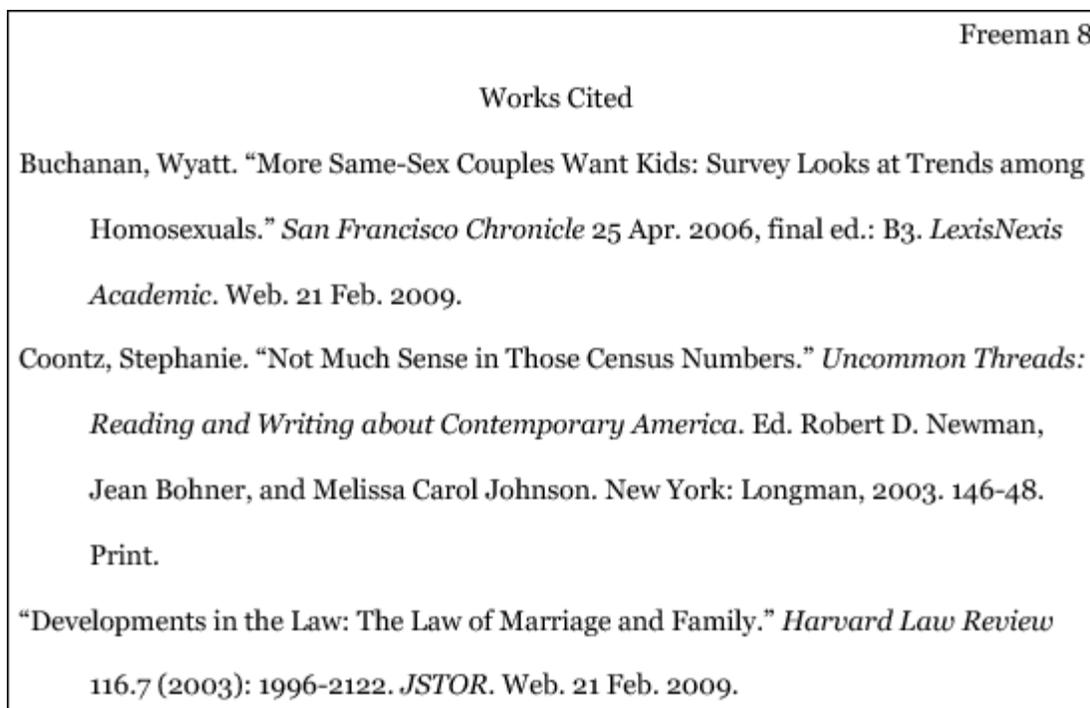


or children. There are many single-parent families in the United States, and some of these may be families where the parents live together but are not married (Coontz 147). Couples that consist of two men or two women are also increasingly common, and more of these couples now also have or want children (Buchanan). Although there is no

Author's last name

Page containing information used

What it looks like in the Works Cited list, when using MLA format:



Freeman 8

Works Cited

Buchanan, Wyatt. "More Same-Sex Couples Want Kids: Survey Looks at Trends among Homosexuals." *San Francisco Chronicle* 25 Apr. 2006, final ed.: B3. *LexisNexis Academic*. Web. 21 Feb. 2009.

Coontz, Stephanie. "Not Much Sense in Those Census Numbers." *Uncommon Threads: Reading and Writing about Contemporary America*. Ed. Robert D. Newman, Jean Bohner, and Melissa Carol Johnson. New York: Longman, 2003. 146-48. Print.

"Developments in the Law: The Law of Marriage and Family." *Harvard Law Review* 116.7 (2003): 1996-2122. *JSTOR*. Web. 21 Feb. 2009.

Notice: "Buchanan" is an electronic source *without* a page number. "Coontz" is a printed source, *with* pages.

Color Marking

At times, your teacher may ask you to “color mark” a text. This does not mean highlighting at random; it means marking for a reason—looking for interesting features to analyze. Here's one system for color marking:

How it Works:

- With one colored pencil or highlighter in hand, read through the pages provided. Highlight any images or words and phrases that seem to repeat themselves and create a pattern. (For instance, you might spot words that have to do with hot and cold or feelings of sadness or color imagery. Each time you see those words and phrases, underline them.)
- Next, pick another color and do the same thing, looking for a different pattern.
- Finally, do this a third time, searching for a third pattern.

Finding Connections:

- List the three pattern areas you picked.
- Under each list, jot down the key words and phrases you highlighted.
- Write about each of the patterns (3 minutes each)
- Write about the connection or contrast in the patterns (4 minutes)
- Write one single assertion —one statement that is arguable (and provable).

A few more options:

- Pick the most important sentence in these pages and say why it is so.
- Write memory lists
- pick three most important images

What is S.C.A.S.I.?

Sometimes, especially in IB English, you'll be asked to read a piece of literature (or a short selection from a piece of literature), and you'll have to do *your own analysis* of it, under exam conditions, without any help from a teacher. Can you find all of the important elements—themes, literary features and devices, the techniques that are used to create various effects—on your own?

As a checklist for yourself, to be sure you've covered all of the important basic elements, S.C.A.S.I. was created.

Ask yourself about:

Setting

Remember that setting involves the place, the time period, and the context associated with them (the American South in the 1920's, a distant planet in the far future, a fancy apartment on the Upper East Side of New York City, all have their own associated contexts that will help to analyze a work).

Character(s)

Who are the characters? As closely as possible, look for clues as to their gender, age, status, relationships among and between each other.

Action

Action is similar to plot, except sometimes you only get a small selection from a story, and you don't know the whole plot. But in any extract, something *happens*—an argument, a discovery, a change of mind, a rise in tension. Trace how the author portrays the action, how the tension or humor or argument is made real for the reader—usually using literary techniques...

Style

...which is where style comes in. Can you describe the author's style? Is it poetic or straightforward? What literary features are used to portray the characters, setting, and action? What imagery is used to present sounds, sights, smells, tastes, etc.?

Idea(s)

The word idea is used instead of *theme*, because again, sometimes you don't have a complete novel or story to discuss, but just an extract. What is the main idea of the piece? What is the main effect you're left with after reading it? Be sure to make this a centerpiece of your introduction and your overall analysis.

On the next page is similar way to examine a text for an *Individual Oral Commentary*.

<p>The Dramatic Situation/Context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What</i> is happening to <i>whom</i>? • <i>Where</i> and <i>when</i> is it happening? • <i>Setting</i>? (Physical/psychological) • <i>Why is it happening</i>? • <i>Then, So what? What's the point? Writer's purpose?</i> • How does the extract <i>represent, contribute, or relate</i> to the work as a whole? 	<p>The Key Ideas/Themes/Tensions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the ideas <i>Explicit</i> (straightforward) or <i>Implicit</i> (suggested)? • What issues are explored? • Are the ideas mostly about <i>Character</i> (relationships, state of mind) or <i>Action</i> (plot/events) or <i>Theme</i>? • What are the <i>Tensions/Conflicts</i> between (among) them? • Look for a <i>180 degree factor/</i> • <i>Contrasts</i> such as good/evil, appearance/reality, body/spirit, freedom/restraint, integration/alienation, doubt/certainty, action/inaction, sensuality/spirituality, etc.
<p>The Structure/Movement</p> <p>Where does the passage <i>Shift</i>? Look for shifts in focus, locale, perspective, voice, tone, meaning...anything!</p> <p>See how the <i>Form/Structure</i> (stanza, paragraph, dialogue) might mirror the shift.</p> <p>Is <i>Irony</i> present? What kind? To what effect?</p> <p>Look for <i>Contrasts and Juxtapositions</i>—for example, light/dark, city/country, orderly/chaotic, technology/nature, reality/artifice, etc.</p>	<p>Style/Literary Qualities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize and cite the writer's <i>Technical Mastery</i>. • What techniques of language are used and to what effect? • Look at <i>Individual Words</i> (diction, register, tone)—<i>Groups of Words</i> (image patterns)—<i>Figures of Speech</i>—(simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, oxymoron, synecdoche, symbol, motif) • Look at <i>Genre</i> specific features: <i>Poetry</i>—rhyme, rhythm, meter, stanza form, alliteration, speaker, onomatopoeia <i>Drama</i>—soliloquy, aside, blank verse, stage effects, action, conflict, protagonist, climax, plot <i>Novel</i>—narrative point of view, characterization, characterization (indirect/direct), chronology/structure <i>Essay</i>—central argument, tone, voice, sentence structure, antithesis, rhetorical question, repetition, parallelism, autobiographical/universal

1. TAKE NOTES IN THESE CATEGORIES

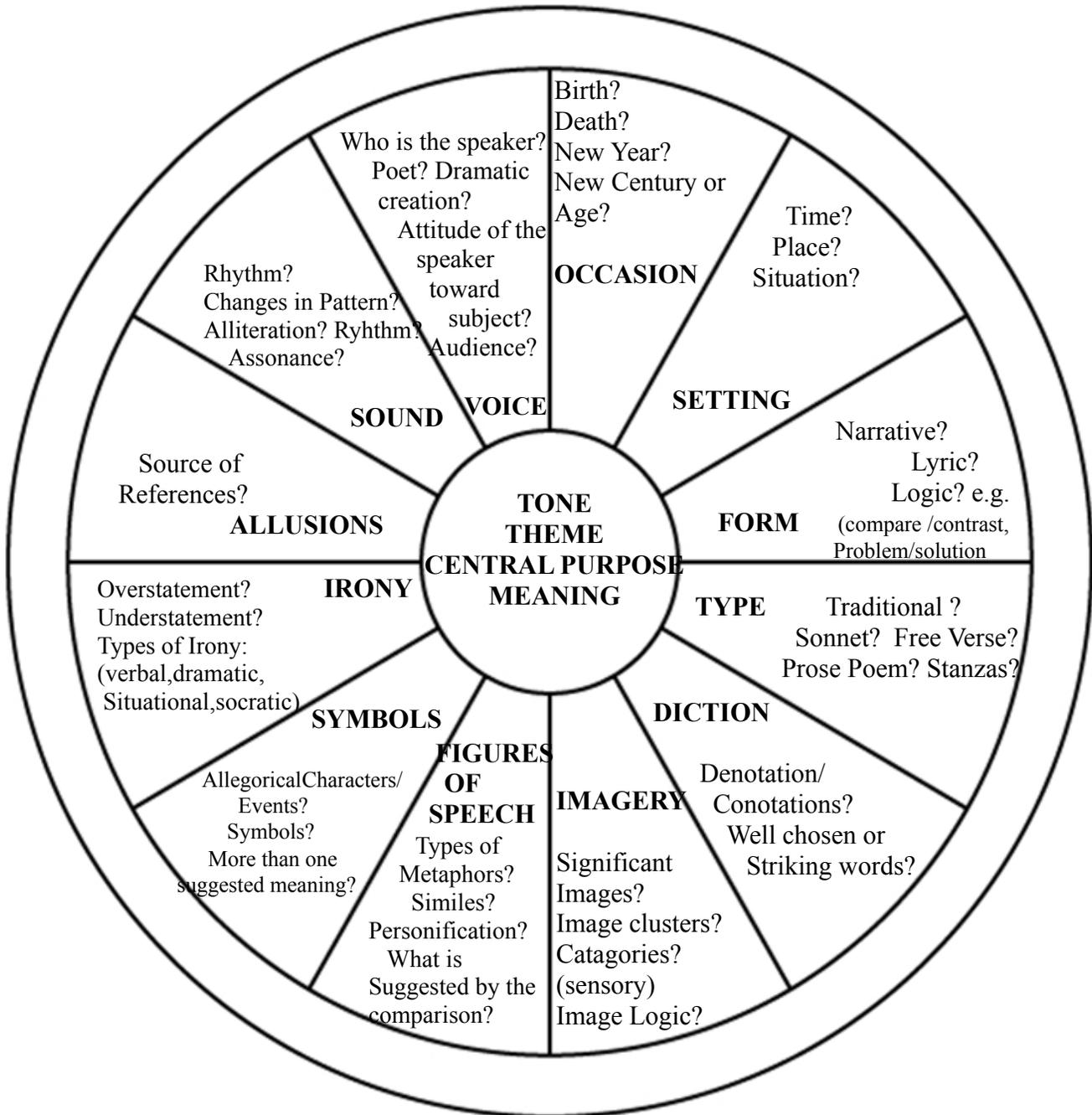
2. ORDER YOUR NOTES INTO SEPARATE TOPICS

3. ORDER THE TOPICS INTO A PATTERN/PRIORITY—FIRST TO LAST, LEAST

IMPORTANT/MOST IMPORTANT, CLAIM TO SUPPORT, CONCRETE TO ABSTRACT, SPECIFIC TO GENERAL, OR VICE VERSA

5. PLAN AN INTRO WITH A GOOD LEAD (ADDRESS GUIDING QUESTIONS)

Commentary Wheel



Outer Sphere—Realm of Observation
Inner Sphere—Realm of Interpretation

The College Essay: Basics

Your college essay is your opportunity to **reveal your best qualities and to show an admission committee what makes you stand out** from other applicants.

How important is the essay?

The National Association for College Admission Counseling found that while grades, strength of curriculum and admission test scores are the top factors in the college admission decision, a majority of colleges and universities **believe the essay to be of the most subjective importance** in determining which academically qualified students they would choose. In other words, when all else is equal between competing applicants, a compelling essay can make the difference. A powerful, well-written essay can also tip the balance for a marginal applicant.

There are typically three types of essay questions:

1. The “you” question

This question boils down to **“Tell us about yourself.”** The college wants to know students better and see how students introduce themselves.

Plus: This type of direct question offers students a chance to reveal something about themselves other than grades and test scores.

Danger: The open-ended nature of these questions can lead to an essay that's all over the place.

2. The “why us” question

Some institutions ask for an essay about a student's choice of a college or career. They're looking for information about the applicant's goals, and about how serious the student's commitment is to this particular college.

Plus: This type of question provides a focus for the essay; that is, why the student chose this particular college or path — and the answer to that will (hopefully) be clear.

Danger: Any factual errors in the essay will reveal that the student really hasn't thought deeply about the choice. For example, writing about attending Carleton College to major in agriculture would be a blunder, because Carleton doesn't have an agriculture major.

An upside to this type of question is that while working on the essay, the student might realize that the college is not a good match — and it's better to know that sooner than later.

3. The “creative” question

The goals of the “creative” question are to evaluate a candidate's **ability to think and write creatively** and to assess the breadth of the student's knowledge and education.

Plus: This kind of question gives students an opportunity to convey their personalities and views.

Danger: Some students may take the “creative” aspect of the question as **license to be obscure, pretentious or undisciplined in their writing.**

The College Essay: Brainstorming Topics for Your College Essay

You should expect to devote about 1-2 weeks simply to brainstorming ideas for your essay. To begin brainstorming a subject idea, consider the following points:

- What are your major accomplishments, and why do you consider them accomplishments? Do not limit yourself to accomplishments you have been formally recognized for. The most interesting essays often are based on accomplishments that may have been trite at the time but become crucial when placed in the context of your life.
- Does any attribute, quality, or skill distinguish you from everyone else? How did you develop this attribute?
- Consider your favorite books, movies, works of art, etc. Have these influenced your life in a meaningful way? Why are they your favorites?
- What was the most difficult time in your life, and why? How did your perspective on life change as a result of the difficulty?
- Have you ever struggled mightily for something and succeeded? What made you successful?
- Have you ever struggled mightily for something and failed? How did you respond?
- Of everything in the world, what would you most like to be doing right now? Where would you most like to be? Who, of everyone living and dead, would you most like to be with? These questions should help you realize what you love most.
- Have you experienced a moment of epiphany, as if your eyes were opened to something you were previously blind to?
- What is your strongest, most unwavering personality trait? Do you maintain strong beliefs or adhere to a philosophy?

- How would your friends characterize you? What would they write about if they were writing your admissions essay for you?

- What have you done outside of the classroom that demonstrates qualities sought after by universities? Of these, which means the most to you?

- What are your most important extracurricular or community activities? What made you join these activities? What made you continue to contribute to them?

- What are your dreams of the future? When you look back on your life in thirty years, what would it take for you to consider your life successful? What people, things, and accomplishments do you need? How does this particular university fit into your plans for the future?

- A significant relationship I had or have and why it is important/meaningful to me:

- A time I took a risk:

- A time I felt humbled:

- One thing very few people know about me is:

- Something I regret:

- Something I am really proud of:

- Something that changed the way I think or look at the world:

- How I am different from most people I know:

- My greatest fear:

- A time I felt truly satisfied:

- A person I admire:

- An object I own that tells a lot about me:

- Something funny that I did or that happened to me:

IB TOK/English Connections

The following questions provide a connection for you with literary works you will study.

- 1) What is the value of literature? How is “good literature” recognized or decided upon?
- 2) What are the justifications and implications of claiming that there are absolute standards for good literature, or that the only standard for good literature is individual taste?
- 3) What knowledge of literature can be gained by focusing attention solely on the work itself, in isolation from the artist and social context?
- 4) Is a work of literature enlarged or diminished by interpretation? What makes something a good or bad interpretation?
- 5) What is the value of learning literature? How is “good literature” recognized or decided on?
- 6) What knowledge of literature can be gained by focusing attention on the writer?
- 7) Does familiarity with literature itself provide knowledge and, if so, what kind? Knowledge of facts? Of the creator of the art form? Of the conventions of the form or tradition? Of psychology or cultural history? Of oneself?
- 8) What is the proper function of literature: to capture a perception of reality, to teach or uplift the mind, to express emotion, to create beauty, to bind a community together or to praise a spiritual power? Are there functions omitted here?
- 9) To what extent and in what ways might literature be regarded as a representation of reality? What “kinds” of literature might be seen as “realistic”?
- 10) What knowledge of literature can be gained by focusing attention on its social, cultural, or historical context?