



English 110: Expository Writing

Course Requirements and Suggestions

Clarence Robertson and Elyse Zucker

2012

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Syllabi

This particular syllabus reflects the departmental desire to have English 110 organized thematically. Even though this is a skills based class and we are teaching essay construction and rhetorical modes, these objectives need to be taught in the context of thematic explorations. Organizing the course thematically facilitates, for students, inter-textual thinking, providing a foundation for both the research paper they will write and the departmental final exam, which has students consider several essays in terms of one theme. One of the essentials of this course is that the students get an essential understanding of the MLA guidelines for writing their research paper.

Sample Syllabus, by Elyse Zucker

**HOSTOS COMMUNITY COLLEGE/C.U.N.Y.
ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
Fall, 2011**

COURSE: English 110-XXXX
PROFESSOR:
OFFICE:
EMAIL

CLASS HOURS:
OFFICE HOURS:
OFFICE PHONE
MAIL BOX: B507

REQUIRED MATERIALS

- A folder for holding accumulated essays, homework assignments and handouts. A notebook for class notes
- White, lined, regular-sized paper with left-hand margin and blue or black pen for in-class essays (do not submit class work in pencil. Use erasable pen instead)
- A paperback or electronic dictionary of your choice
- Cooley, Thomas, ed. *The Norton Sampler*, 7th ed. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Co., Inc., 2010 ISBN 978-0-393-92935-5.

The textbook is available at the Hostos bookstore, as well as online from Amazon.com for 0.01 cent upward (prices change w/sales).

COURSE DESCRIPTION: English 110, a foundational writing course, is designed to strengthen students' composing skills so that they will produce increasingly complex and better-structured essays. Reading and responding to interdisciplinary texts representing various rhetorical modes, students will practice paraphrasing and summarizing these texts, enrich their vocabulary, and improve their writing, revision and proofreading skills. Additionally, students will be introduced to the use of print and on-line secondary sources. Upon completion of this, students will be able to respond critically, in writing, to a variety of texts, integrating their own ideas with those presented in the readings.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

In this course the students will:

- learn to use various rhetorical modes and write short, well-organized, grammatically correct essays with reference to reading,
- learn to improve grammar, syntax and usage,

- learn critical thinking through analysis of the tone and attitude of assigned readings,
- learn to analyze and recognize syntax, structure, parallelism, antithesis, and informal/informal and abstract/concrete diction in assigned readings,
- learn to write summaries so students can evaluate sources, and
- learn to paraphrase, cite and quote directly from documents and know the difference between proper usage and plagiarism

REQUIRED WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

It is expected that written assignments will be drafted at home or in class and refined and reviewed with the help of classmates and the instructor during regular group workshops that will be scheduled before each due date for final drafts. While there is no restriction on the type of paper that can be used for preliminary drafts, all final drafts of compositions done at home should be typed on 8 ½ x 11 paper and handed in together with your earlier copies of the work. Criteria for the evaluation of the written compositions will be established by the instructor in consultation with the members of the class.

FINAL GRADE

The final grade for the course will be determined by:

- The quality of the five essays done throughout the semester (50%)
- The quality of the final examination (15%)
- The quality of the research project (20%)
- The quality of class participation, including the successful completion of all un-graded assignments such as homework, in class writing, and group exercises (15%)
- Meeting all of the other course requirements.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. You are expected to attend every class meeting. Every class you miss is detrimental to your progress in this class. Given the intensity of the assignments, even one absence will cause you to fall behind. Furthermore, much of the work we will do in this course will require you to work in pairs or in groups; therefore, absences not only affect your own progress and success, but they also inconvenience your classmates. If you have an emergency, and you have to be absent, you must contact me to find out what work you missed. It is also recommended that you exchange numbers with several other students in the class. An absence will not excuse you from submitting your work on time. More than 2 absences can and will affect your grade. More than 3 absences will result in your failing the class.

2. All reading assignments must be completed before the class period in which they will be discussed. Although essays and exams are essential to passing the class, class participation is essential to doing well in the class. Participation includes coming to class prepared and ready to discuss any assigned readings or essays.
3. All deadlines for writing assignments must be met. Lateness will affect your essay grade. If you are having trouble writing the paper, speak to me before the deadline. I will work with you on it and we can set up a reasonable deadline. I will only allow this if you tell me you are having trouble before the deadline.
4. The length of essays will be specified for each assignment and should be typed, double-spaced with one-inch margins.
5. Texts must be brought to every class meeting.
6. Before the end of the semester you must attend the workshop on Avoiding Plagiarism offered by our college library, as well as one more workshop of your choosing offered there (recommended are Infolit 101, Surf Smart 1, and Keys to Database Searching). Failure to attend the workshop will affect your final grade.
7. Any paper that is plagiarized or submitted without a draft will automatically fail. Plagiarized papers cannot be rewritten, revised, or resubmitted.
8. If I discover your work has been plagiarized I will automatically give you a failing grade. Please see the college's policy on academic integrity on pages 158-160 of the Hostos Community College catalog.

ESSAY ASSIGNMENTS

A large portion of your final grade will be based on your successful completion of the essay assignments. These assignments will be distributed to you over the course of the semester. They will ask you either to respond to themes we have been discussing in class or they will ask you to write using a particular rhetorical mode. These assignments have been designed to allow you to hone various aspects of your writing. A detailed explanation of my grading criteria will be distributed, but overall, your papers will be evaluated based on coherence, development, support, and mechanics. Your participation in peer review sessions will also count toward your individual essay grades.

THE RESEARCH PROJECT

A detailed description of the research project will be distributed later in the semester, but as a general overview, you will be expected to develop a research question, based on the different topics raised in the class readings, and research it. You will use at least 3 secondary sources to attempt to answer your research question in a paper of 5-6 pages.

INFORMAL WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

In addition to the graded essay assignments that you will have to complete to do well in this class, you will also be required to complete a variety of informal, non-graded assignments throughout the semester. Examples of these assignments may include, but are not limited to, any in-class writing such as reflections, or free-writing, group projects, and focus questions assigned for homework.

REWRITE POLICY

If you are not satisfied with your essay grades, you are permitted 1 re-write. You must submit the original essay with the rewritten version. In order to submit a rewrite you must also consult with me before turning in the revised essays. Also, there is no guarantee that the rewritten essay will receive a higher grade. Re-writes will not be accepted after the last day of class. *Please keep in mind that higher grades from rewrites will only count heavily if you have demonstrated on the final and last paper that you have sustained the improvements you made.*

LATENESS

In addition to being rude to both your professor and your classmates, lateness puts you at a disadvantage in the class. New assignments, syllabus changes, handouts, and any other class business are discussed within the first 10 minutes of class. If you are late, you will find yourself falling behind the rest of the class. Frequent lateness will affect your grade.

COURSE OUTLINE*

Week 1: Topic: the Process of Writing: Diagnostic exam/ introduction to the course by reading about writing and writing about reading/ read “The Miss Dennis School of Writing” by Alice Steinbach P.57: putting words into pictures/ Descriptive writing in response to the Salvadore Dali picture, *The Persistence of Memory*: putting pictures into words / tracking movement from observation to extrapolation/ write a one page descriptive essay in which you describe something or someone that matters to you. This will be your first and last writing assignment that will be personal.

Week 2 Topic: Nature and the Environment. Read “The Island of Plenty” by Johnson C Montgomery, p 399, and handouts on the Duggar Family (19 and Still Counting), “Environment Blamed in Western Tree Deaths,” by Mireya Navarro, and Wendell Berry’s “The Idea of a Local Economy.” Response writing to surrealist photo, *Treehouse* by Jerry Uelsmann. Begin essay #1 in class –essay in cause and effect—on Population and its Relation to the Environment /writing and grammar workshop

(based on students' own work) /Summary writing & paragraph construction, assisted by owl@purdue.com and <http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar> sites.

Week 3: Essay #1 due Thursday. Begin new topic: Gender and Identity. Read Jon Katz's "How Boys Become Men" p 220, Deborah Tannen's "Gender in the Classroom" p 282, "Watching Oprah from Behind the Veil", by Jeff Jacoby, p. 255, & handouts, "What Has Gone Wrong with Our Boys" by Judith Kleinfeld, as well as "The Relationship Between Masculinity Ideology, Loneliness, and Separation-Individuation Difficulties," by Chris Blazina, Rachel Eddins, and Andrea BurrIDGE. Group workshops and rubric review. Writing topic TBA/ supporting a position.

Week 4: Gender and Identity continued. Preparation for persuasive essay via in-class debate (on which gender faces more challenges in American society) based on assignments, own articles gathered and common knowledge/experience about challenges each gender faces in contemporary life. In-class exam on gender and identity (this counts as essay #2). Peer review of essay#1/ Grammar workshop: focus on summary writing and topic sentences.

Week 5: Topic: Unit on Living with Disabilities/ Begin Discussion of Contrastive Analysis and obtaining research and incorporating it into writing/ Read "A Giant Step" by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. p. 354, handout of essay "Body Imperfect" by Debi Davis, and "Seven Famous Sets of Conjoined Twins," by Stacy (focus on self-perception and reality). Students will from now on incorporate research pieces into their written work. MLA style documentation/preparation for essay #3 / grammar topic taken from your work TBA.

Week 6: Disabilities Unit cont. Group workshop and peer review of Essay #3/ Review of in-class exam #2.

Week 7-8: Essay #3 due /New Unit: Memories and the Mind. Read "My Grandmother's Ashtray: Why Smart People do Stupid Things," by Laurence Gonzalez, p 144; "Losing Private Dwyer" by Lawrence Downes, p. 154, and handouts "Post Traumatic Stress Disorder" by Rachel Yehuda, PhD, and excerpt on memory and culture from *Psychology: An Introduction* by Benjamin B Lahey. Begin Essay # 4 (process analysis) in class, peer-review & workshops & research methods/ Essay # 4 due week 9. In-class and office conferencing.

Week 9-10: Topic: Jazz and the American Spirit. Read "Jazz: Music Beyond Time and Nations" by Nat Hentoff; excerpt from "Sonny's Blues" by James Baldwin/listen and write in response to Jazz CDs (*in straight ahead*, Latin and Broadway versions) of artists featured in the reading selections, and obtain a piece of research considering Jazz and American history. In-class writing in response to Pablo Picasso's picture, "Three Musicians." In-class essay #5 on how the Jazz selections covered exemplify one aspect of the American spirit. /Review of Essay #4/ In-class and office conferencing.

Week 11-12: Research topics chosen by students and relating to themes explored in class must be approved by professor and the process initiated in class, including pre-writing, peer-review and research integration. Review of exam #5.

Week 13: Preparation for Final Paper and Departmental Final Exam/In-class and office conferencing. All revisions due.

Week 14: Final paper and final exam.

***THE WORK ASSIGNMENTS IN THIS SYLLABUS ARE TENTATIVE AND MAY BE SUBJECT TO CHANGE. YOU WILL BE GIVEN A MONTH BY MONTH BREAKDOWN OF THE SELECTIONS TO BE READ AND TYPE OF ESSAYS TO BE WRITTEN.**

Essay Assignments

Essay #1: Students will begin in class take home essay in cause and effect format, on Population and its relation to the Environment, written in response to the following selections: "The Island of Plenty" by Johnson C Montgomery, p 399; handouts on the Duggar Family (19 kids and counting); "Environment Blamed in Western Tree Deaths," by Mireya Navarro; Wendell Berry's "The Idea of a Local Economy," and surrealist photo, "Treehouse" by Jerry Uelsmann. This essay will be written in Standard English and be a minimum of 3 standard MLA formatted pages. Peer-review will be utilized in both the pre-writing process to help students formulate their topics and after grading to help them learn from their work. This assignment assesses Learning Outcomes 1,2,4,5 and counts for 10 points.

Essay #2: In-class essay exam, in persuasive format, on Gender Unit (students will justify who has it harder in America, males or females), and draw on the following selections: "How Boys Become Men," by Jon Katz, p 220; "Gender in the Classroom," by Deborah Tannen p 282; "Watching Oprah From Behind the Veil," by Jeff Jacoby p 255, and handouts, "What Has Gone Wrong with Our Boys?" by Judith Kleinfeld and "The Relationship Between Masculinity Ideology, Loneliness, and Separation-Individuation Difficulties," by Chris Blazina, Rachel Eddins, and Andrea Burrige, as well as shorter pieces on the physiology of the brain. This essay will be written in Standard English and assesses Learning Outcomes 1,2,4,5. It is worth 10 points.

Essay #3: essay on Living with Disabilities (focus is on self-perception and reality), employing Contrastive Analysis and written in response to "A Giant Step" by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. p. 354; handout of essay "Body Imperfect" by Debi Davis; article, "Defining the Good Life Following Acquired Physical Disability," by Dana s Dunn and Clint Brody; "Seven Famous Sets of Conjoined Twins," by Stacy and research obtained by students. This essay uses peer review in both the pre-writing process to help students formulate topics and after grading to help them learn from their work. It will be written in Standard English, be 3 MLA formatted pages, assesses Learning Outcomes 1,2,3,4,5, and is worth 10 points.

Essay #4: In-class essay utilizing Process Analysis on theme of Memories and the Mind, based on the following selections: “My Grandmother’s Ashtray: Why Smart People do Stupid Things,” by Laurence Gonzalez, p 144; “Losing Private Dwyer” by Lawrence Downes, p. 154; “Post Traumatic Stress Disorder” by Rachel Yehuda, PhD, and handout on memory and culture from *Psychology: An Introduction* by Benjamin B Lahey, as well as research document of students’ choosing pertaining to memory and the mind. This essay uses peer review in preparation for the exam and will be written in Standard English. It assesses Learning Outcomes 1,2,3,4,5. It is worth 10 points.

Essay # 5: Essay on Jazz and the American Spirit (how the selections covered exemplify one aspect of Jazz in relation to the American spirit), based on handouts “Jazz: Music Beyond Time and Nations” by Nat Hentoff; excerpt from “Sonny’s Blues” by James Baldwin, Pablo Picasso’s picture, “Three Musicians,” CDs played in class of artists featured in the reading selections (*straight ahead*, Latin and Broadway versions played and compared) & document chosen by student on Jazz and American history. This essay uses peer review in preparation for the exam and will be 3 MLA formatted pages, as well as written in Standard English. It assesses Learning Outcomes 1,2,3,4,5. It is worth 10 points.

Essay #6: Research paper on topic of students’ choosing related to one of the themes explored in class. Thesis must be approved by the professor. It will be written in MLA format, Standard English and be 5 to 7 pages. A minimum of 3 scholarly secondary sources must be integrated in the paper. It is worth 20 points.

Sample Lesson Plans

English 110 is a crucial course for students at Hostos Community College, as it affords them the last opportunity they will have to acquire the skills needed to write essays in response to reading selections from across the curriculum. It thus prepares them for the various disciplines they will need to study. 110 also lays the foundation for English 111 by teaching students MLA formatting as well as how to support claims with textual evidence. It is a writing course in which students need to be guided, in class, through the writing process, to enable them to identify their strengths and needs so necessary for improving their writing. Having students write frequently in the classroom and begin their take-home assignments in class helps assure that when they approach their assignments outside of the classroom, they will be fortified with the skills to progress on their own.

A Sample Unit Plan, by Clarence Robertson

Motivations are exercises designed to excite the students, introduce the subject, and create continuity.

Thinks (Think in Inks) are low stakes writing exercises designed to allow students to access prior knowledge and generate discussion.

The **lesson development** moves the discussion from prior knowledge and low stakes exercises to an examination of more serious reading materials and more formal writing assignments.

Unit Theme: Gender Roles

Day 1

Motivation

- Show video: "If I Were a Boy," Beyoncé (00:00 – 05:05)

Think

- Write question on board: Why does Beyoncé want to be a boy?
 - Allow the students a few minutes to respond to the question.
 - This will allow you a chance to call roll. I also like to walk around the room to take a look at what some students have written while I was calling roll and encourage others who may be blocked to keep their pens moving. (05:05 – 11:00)
 - First, allow some students to voluntarily read what they have written. (11:00 – 20:00)
 - Then, allow students to respond to each other. I personally think it's important to allow students an opportunity to share their initial responses before they respond to each other. (20:00 -30:00)

Lesson Development

- Discuss Scott Russell Sander's "The Men We Carry in Our Minds." (30:00 – 60:00)
 - Use specific passages to compare and contrast why Sander's believes women desire the lives of their father's to why Beyoncé wants to be a boy.
 - Use specific passages to examine the impact of community and class on perceptions of gender roles.
 - This helps lay the foundation for the use of outside sources to support and illustrate ideas.

Think (60:00-75:00)

- Read an excerpt from Stephanie Coontz essay “The M.R.S. and the Phd.D.” and write a provocative question related to the excerpt on the board: As a society do you think we still need men?
 - Remind students to read “The M.R.S. and the Phd.D.,” by Stephanie Coontz, for homework.

Day 2

Think (00:00 – 15:00)

- **Context:** Yesterday I asked you if our society needs men; today, I want to ask you if there is a difference between being a man and being male.
- **Write on board:** Is saying society does or does not need men the same as saying society does or does no need males?
- **Share and Discuss:** Lead discussion towards the difference between sex (male and female) and gender. Introduce masculine and feminine.

Lesson Development 1 (15:00-35:00)

- Discuss specific passages from Stephanie Coontz essay “The M.R.S. and the Phd.D.”

Lesson Development 2 (35:00-70:00)

- Model using one of the passages from the essay to create a sample body paragraph that includes outside materials and MLA citation. Here I do the work and think out loud so that students witness the process. I also make and later correct intentional mistakes.
- Model a second body paragraph on the board. This time I let the students guide the development of the paragraph. Again, I make intentional mistakes, but now allow the students to correct me. If something is missed, I’ll make the correction later.

Set up Homework (70:00-75:00)

Days 3-?

Repeat above with different materials, and start modeling introductions, conclusions and a sample works cited page once you feel students understand body paragraphs.

Final Assessment

- Students will write an expository essay tracing the evolution of gender roles and gender expectations in modern America. The essay must contain materials covered in class as well as outside research materials, and the essay must follow MLA guidelines.

Learning Objectives for the Unit

- Students will formulate their own ideas in writing.
- Students will orally engage the ideas of others.
- Students will connect previously reviewed materials to the materials at hand.
- Students will review methods for creating well-structured body paragraphs, introductions and conclusions.
- Students will follow MLA guidelines for writing research papers.

A Sample Lesson Plan, by Elyse Zucker

English 110 Unit Theme: Biodiversity

Ice-breaker for students: Make a list of things/creatures you might notice on any given day that are evidence of biodiversity.

Have students share their lists as a way to get them to connect to the article(s) by drawing on their own schemas, and as a lead-in to discussing the article(s), which will follow. After a 10 or 15 minute discussion, put students into groups of 4 to answer, in writing, the prompts below. Leave 20 minutes at the end of class so that each group has time to report their findings, which the instructor can list on the board. You can also assign different questions to different groups.

In groups of 4, write your answers to the following prompts in response to Bryan Welch's article, "The Importance of Biodiversity." One person should be the reporter but *everyone* in your group must contribute to the answers. Give evidence for your answers.

- What is biodiversity?
- Why is it important?
- What sources does Welch draw on to lend support to his case for the importance of biodiversity?
- Are his supports effective? Why or why not?
- Bryan Welch gets really excited in this article. What thrills him and why?
- Why do you think children enjoy connecting with nature or seeing the diversity or biodiversity of nature and why do many of us lose out child-like responsiveness to nature?

End of class writing: in your journals write the most important thing you learned in class today, or a question you have in response to today's class, or a response you have to the lesson.

Follow up lesson: have students work in groups to make a comparison/contrast chart. How does the *NY Times* article, "A New Species in New York Was Croaking in Plain Sight" by Lisa W Foderaro compare with "The Importance of Biodiversity" by Bryan Welch?

Compare

Contrast

Write a claim you feel is being made in each of these two articles and support your claims with a quote in MLA format. Be sure to introduce the quote.

Alternate assignment: in triple entry journal format, make a claim, support it with evidence and comment or interpret.

Claim

Evidence

Response

At the second paragraph from the bottom of the first page of the *NY Times* article, it is stated that "Even in an urban center like New York, where herpetologists have tromped all over for a century or more, there can be new species out there. This shows the importance of urban areas in terms of conservation and biodiversity." What, in your opinion, is that importance?

Reading Sample 1

The Importance of Biodiversity

Maintaining the awe-inspiring abundance of species on Earth could be the benchmark for humanity's success.

By Bryan Welch
June/July 2011



“Whoa. I’m one of more than 5,000 frog species on Earth? Cool.”
PHOTO: FOTOLIA

Earth is home to 80,000 species of snails and slugs. About 5,000 species of frogs have been recorded. Ten thousand species of birds decorate the skies. Our planet provides habitats for about 3,000 species of snakes, at least 25,000 different kinds of fish, about 2,300 rodents, and innumerable forms of insects, bacteria, fungi and viruses. I say “innumerable” because, although we’ve named 100,000 types of fungi and documented more than a million species of insects, we’re conscious that we’ve identified only a fraction of the diverse species out there. Experts estimate there are between 2 and 30 *million* species of insects on Earth. There are so many kinds of insects in so many out-of-the-way places that scientists can only take a wild stab at the range of their diversity.

We have named about 600,000 species of beetles, for heaven’s sake. A couple of years ago, I discovered a tiny frog I’d never seen before in a wet spot behind my shed. I was thrilled. Last year, my wife and I spotted a merlin, a small species of falcon, hunting around our blackberry patch. I watched it through a telescope from our living room. The discovery made me feel ecstatic.

Sometimes I get a little drunk on natural diversity. A good sort of drunk. I’ve been known to crawl around a pasture on my belly counting plant species. Not for the

sake of science — just to know the number. My wife and I like to pick out how many different bird songs we can hear on summer mornings.

Some find my enthusiasm silly, but I have good company in my intoxication. Thomas Jefferson expounded joyously on the sacred multiplicity of creation. So have renowned authors and thinkers such as Aristotle, Pliny the Elder, Thich Nhat Hanh, Terry Tempest Williams, William Wordsworth and many more.

As the floodwaters described in the Old Testament receded, the Judeo-Christian God promised never again to punish the planet, telling Noah, “I am establishing my covenant with you and with your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the Earth with you, as many as came out of the ark.” His covenant was not with humanity alone, but, explicitly, “with every living thing.” Buddhism, Hinduism and many other religions also give specific, divine instruction on the importance of preserving diverse species. Almost everyone, it seems, recognizes the value.

<http://www.motherearthnews.com/nature-community/importance-of-biodiversity-zm0z11zsto.aspx?page=2>

Pulitzer Prize-winning biologist Edward O. Wilson is today’s unofficial high priest of biodiversity. He says we don’t need scientists, politicians, economists or clergy to tell us biodiversity is important. Biodiversity is not just important for technical, scientific reasons — it’s important because it’s the symbol and symptom of a rich, healthy world.

In his book *Biodiversity*, Wilson says the “inherent wrongness of the destruction of biological diversity” is apparent to “all manner of personal philosophies.” He contends that the sacred value of biodiversity gives conservation “a sound footing outside the slick terrain of the economists and their philosophical allies.” Wilson argues that we should value biodiversity for its own sake. I think that’s a wonderful idea. I think it may be the best idea I’ve heard in a long time.

If we need some yardstick by which to measure our progress toward real, effective environmental stewardship, then biodiversity should be that yardstick. What better way is there, after all, to value creation than by its diversity? It’s the best score card for the planet’s health.

This planet’s creator obviously values variety. Famous biologist J. B. S. Haldane, when asked whether his scientific studies taught him anything about God, replied that this planet’s architect apparently has “an inordinate fondness for beetles.” Haldane’s offhand remark was satirical and profound at the same time. Based on the evidence, God must be incredibly fond of beetles indeed. And dragonflies. And fungi. Unfortunately, half of all the plant and animal species that were living on Earth when I was born might be gone in my grandchildren’s lifetimes. Human activities are putting a lot of pressure on biodiversity. The planet hasn’t seen the current rate

of extinction since the demise of the dinosaurs 65 million years ago. We're probably losing between 50 and 150 species per day. Extinction is normal, but our current rate of extinction is far from normal. In fact, the current rate is at least 10,000 times greater than the historic average rate of species extinction according to the United Nations Development Programme, an organization dedicated to world development and poverty reduction. This alarming rate of extinction is without a doubt the result of human activities — pollution, deforestation, construction, industrialization. By 2100, if current trends persist, two-thirds of the species that were alive in 1900 will have disappeared.

<http://www.motherearthnews.com/nature-community/importance-of-biodiversity-zm0z11zsto.aspx?page=3>

The whole idea of a species ceasing to exist is difficult to grasp. At the time of the American Revolution, people generally didn't think it was even possible. An article of faith since Medieval times had been that God's "Great Chain of Being," complete with every species that had ever existed, remained intact. Thomas Jefferson didn't believe in extinction. He believed the idea was heretical. A couple of decades after Jefferson was gone, Alfred Lord Tennyson mourned the new reality of extinction in a poem called "In Memoriam," where he wishes "That not one life shall be destroy'd, / Or cast as rubbish to the void ..."

While this notion that creatures disappear forever isn't easy to swallow, even more difficult is the realization that humanity may be responsible for sending a lot of those species "to the void." But the fact that we're responsible for mass extinctions is becoming more and more obvious. Some scientists are even in favor of announcing the end of the Holocene epoch and naming the current epoch the "Anthropocene," signaling a period in which humankind is the dominant natural force on the planet. But rather than resisting this recognition, what if we embrace the opportunity? What if we acknowledge that biological diversity is inherently good, and that to diminish it is inherently wrong? Just plain wrong.

If we target global warming or pollution as primary obstacles in our journey toward sustainability, maybe we're setting our sights too low. Maybe we should, instead, aim our efforts at preserving biological diversity in all of its natural splendor. Pursuing any other goal seems inferior by comparison and not worthy of our vast potential as a species.

Bryan Welch, Publisher and Editorial Director of MOTHER EARTH NEWS, is fascinated by the intricate and interdependent relationships among plants, animals and people. He is the author of [Beautiful and Abundant: Building the World We Want](#).

Read more: <http://www.motherearthnews.com/nature-community/importance-of-biodiversity-zm0z11zsto.aspx?page=3#ixzz1m1Nrp7rc>

Reading Sample 2

March 13, 2012

A New Species in New York Was Croaking in Plain Sight by **LISA W. FODERARO**

The croak gave it away.

On a foray into the wilds of Staten Island in 2009, Jeremy A. Feinberg, a doctoral candidate in ecology and evolution at Rutgers University, heard something strange as he listened for the distinctive mating call of the [southern leopard frog](#) — usually a repetitive chuckle. But this was a single cluck.

“I started hearing these calls, and I realized they were really distinct,” Mr. Feinberg said.

Three years later, Mr. Feinberg and four other scientists who joined him in multiple field and laboratory studies, are finally comfortable making their declaration: a new species of leopard frog — as yet unnamed — has been identified in New York City and a number of surrounding counties.

The find is surprising on a number of fronts, not least of which is that the new frog was hiding in plain sight in one of the most populated centers in the world. (Most new species are found in remote areas.) And it illustrates the power of genetic testing in parsing more finely those animals that may be nearly identical in appearance, but are, in fact, of different species.

There are more than a dozen leopard frogs, ranging from Canada to Central America. Medium in size, with dark spots on a tan, olive or green background, they gravitate toward grassy meadows and breed in ponds or pools. The researchers say that the new frog species was confused for a long time with the southern leopard frog, which it closely resembles.

Its known range is limited, more or less, to commuting distance from Midtown Manhattan, stretching from around Trenton, N.J., in the south, to Putnam County, N.Y., to the north.

“Here is a brand-new species, and it’s not a species of bacteria or a barely visible insect,” said [H. Bradley Shaffer](#), a professor in the department of ecology and evolutionary biology at the University of California at Los Angeles. “It’s a big

amphibian, and kids have probably been catching and playing with it for years,” he said. “Even in an urban center like New York, where herpetologists have tromped all over for a century or more, there can be new species out there. That shows the importance of urban areas in terms of conservation and biodiversity.”

The findings are to be published in an issue of the journal *Molecular Phylogenetics and Evolution*, but are currently [available online](#). Much of the genetic analysis was performed in Professor Shaffer’s laboratory at the University of California at Davis, where he worked until recently.

There, with his encouragement, Catherine E. Newman, an evolutionary biologist who had done her master’s thesis on the southern leopard frog, studied the frog’s DNA, taken from samples sent by Mr. Feinberg and others. She compared it with the DNA of southern and northern leopard frogs, which range widely north and south of New York City.

Local amphibian fans can be forgiven for not noticing the new frog’s unique nature. “I wouldn’t know which one I was holding because they all look so similar,” said Ms. Newman, who is now pursuing her Ph.D. at Louisiana State University. “But all of our results showed this one’s lineage is very clearly genetically distinct.”

So far, Mr. Feinberg has positively identified the new species on Staten Island, although he says it probably once inhabited Manhattan and the other boroughs. He has found specimens in the Meadowlands and the [Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge](#) in New Jersey, and Putnam and Orange Counties in New York. Some frogs were also collected in central Connecticut.

“It’s a very small range and even if we went back 400 to 500 years, it probably would have been considered a rare animal,” he said.

The dead center of the known range, oddly, is near Yankee Stadium, even though the frog has not yet been found in the Bronx.

“I think that at this point it’s very important to do additional surveys,” Professor Shaffer said. The frog’s range “may be no wider than we have found or it may be wider.”

Over the years, a few other scientists almost identified the new species, but fell short. In 1936, one esteemed herpetologist wrote that he suspected there was a third frog species in the general New York City area. But he did not investigate further.

In the early 1970s, another scientist went on a listening tour of the various leopard frogs' mating calls while driving from Florida to the Northeast. "She missed this entire area," Mr. Feinberg said. "She might have been driving on I-95 and just skipped over the weird call area."

As the lead author on a second paper that is to explore the physical characteristics and call of the new frog, Mr. Feinberg will have the honor of naming rights, choosing a scientific and common name. For now he's not letting the frog out of the bag.

"I've given it lots of thought," he said. "Part of me has always wanted to call these New York leopard frogs, but I think people in New Jersey and Connecticut will protest. I have to balance the politics with the naming."

Final Exams

We understand that teachers differ somewhat in the way they evaluate student writing. However, we believe that it is useful to have guidelines for the way we judge our students at the end of the semester, so that we are sending our students to ENG 111 and elsewhere with the writing ability they will need. The criteria were decided by a majority of those ENG 110 instructors who attended course-level meetings. We have used as our guide the course objectives, as follows:

In this class, students will:

- learn to use various rhetorical modes and write short, well-organized, grammatically correct essays with reference to readings,
- learn to improve grammar, syntax and usage,
- learn critical thinking through analysis of the tone and attitude of assigned readings,
- learn to analyze and recognize syntax, structure, parallelism, antithesis, and formal/informal and abstract/concrete diction in assigned readings,
- learn to write summaries so students can evaluate sources, and
- learn to paraphrase, cite and quote correctly from documents and know the difference between proper usage and plagiarism.

Descriptions for Evaluations of Final Exams

A Papers (Excellent)

1. Shows originality, creativity and critical skills in the approach to and development of the essay, moving beyond the skeletal requirements of the assignment or challenging its assumptions.
2. Has a thorough understanding of the texts and familiarity with the various rhetorical modes, and may challenge the readings on their own terms.
3. Shows superior understanding of the distinction between text analysis and personal response, with the latter clearly being informed by the former.
4. Makes connections between the readings and the writer's own ideas in a way that moves beyond step-by-step logic.
5. Includes quotations and paraphrase, with citing of sources, which speak appropriately to the points being made.
6. Has excellent organization and essay form with well-structured paragraphs and effective transition between paragraphs.
7. Shows strong fluency and vocabulary usage.
8. Makes minimal number of errors in punctuation, syntax, tense structure, subject-verb agreement, and sentence formation.

B Papers (Good; Solid)

1. Addresses all parts of the writing prompt with strong focus, solid analytical skills and coherence.
2. Demonstrates strong understanding of readings through different rhetorical modes.
3. Draws a distinction between text analysis and personal response, with no confusion between the two.
4. Makes analytical connections and distinctions between readings and own ideas.
5. Uses generally correct and appropriate quotations, paraphrases, and citations.

6. Uses clearly organized paragraphs with transitions, with few lapses in the use of conventions.
7. Demonstrates fluency and appropriate vocabulary usage.
8. Has some surface-level errors which do not interfere with the understanding of the essay.

C Papers (Basic)

1. Addresses all or most parts of the assignment adequately, but focus may lapse briefly.
2. Demonstrates accurate understanding of readings, although attempts at the use of rhetorical modes may be incomplete or not fully relevant.
3. Demonstrates understanding but periodically loses control of the distinction between textual analysis and personal response, favoring personal response.
4. Shows connections between readings and own ideas, but they may not all be appropriate or adequately explained.
5. Demonstrates basic knowledge of the use of quotations, paraphrasing, and citations.
6. Demonstrates basic organization and connection-of ideas.
7. Uses competent but unsophisticated vocabulary.
8. Shows surface-level errors that occasionally distract from meaning.

D Papers (Simplistic)

1. Addresses some parts of the writing assignment or all parts superficially.
2. Demonstrates partial understanding of readings through summary or explanation, but understanding is flawed or incomplete.

3. Has some trouble distinguishing between text analysis and personal response and clearly favors the latter.
4. Makes few or unwarranted connections between readings and own ideas.
5. Uses paraphrase, direct quotation and citation, but may identify references inconsistently or incorrectly.
6. Contains a thesis statement and some development and generally stays on the topic, but ideas may be repeated and transitions may be weak or missing.
7. Uses vocabulary which may at times be limited, repetitive and/or non-standard.
8. Has noticeable surface-level errors which impede comprehension.

F Papers (Inadequate)

1. Shows little or no understanding of the assignment.
2. Demonstrates little or no understanding of the texts.
3. Has great difficulty understanding the distinction between textual analysis and personal response.
4. Fails to show connections between readings and own ideas.
5. Makes deeply flawed attempts to use direct quotation, paraphrase and citation, or exhibits no use of direct quotation, paraphrase and citation.
6. Demonstrates poor development of Ideas.
7. Uses simplistic vocabulary.
8. Makes severe surface-level errors.

Sample Readings for Final Exams

How It Feels to Be Colored Me

by Zora Neale Hurston (1891 - 1960)

I am colored but I offer nothing in the way of extenuating circumstances except the fact that I am the only Negro in the United States whose grandfather on the mother's side was *not* an Indian chief.

I remember the very day that I became colored. Up to my thirteenth year I lived in the little Negro town of Eatonville, Florida. It is exclusively a colored town. The only white people I knew passed through the town going to or coming from Orlando. The native whites rode dusty horses, the Northern tourists chugged down the sandy village road in automobiles. The town knew the Southerners and never stopped cane chewing when they passed. But the Northerners were something else again. They were peered at cautiously from behind curtains by the timid. The more venturesome would come out on the porch to watch them go past and got just as much pleasure out of the tourists as the tourists got out of the village.

The front porch might seem a daring place for the rest of the town, but it was a gallery seat for me. My favorite place was atop the gatepost. Proscenium box for a born first-nighter. Not only did I enjoy the show, but I didn't mind the actors knowing that I liked it. I usually spoke to them in passing. I'd wave at them and when they returned my salute, I would say something like this: "Howdy-do-well-I-thank-you-where-you-goin'?" Usually automobile or the horse paused at this, and after a queer exchange of compliments, I would probably "go a piece of the way" with them, as we say in farthest Florida. If one of my family happened to come to the front in time to see me, of course negotiations would be rudely broken off. But even

so, it is clear that I was the first "welcome-to-our-state" Floridian, and I hope the Miami Chamber of Commerce will please take notice.

During this period, white people differed from colored to me only in that they rode through town and never lived there. They liked to hear me "speak pieces" and sing and wanted to see me dance the parse-me-la, and gave me generously of their small silver for doing these things, which seemed strange to me for I wanted to do them so much that I needed bribing to stop, only they didn't know it. The colored people gave no dimes. They deplored any joyful tendencies in me, but I was their Zora nevertheless. I belonged to them, to the nearby hotels, to the county--everybody's Zora.

But changes came in the family when I was thirteen, and I was sent to school in Jacksonville. I left Eatonville, the town of the oleanders, a Zora. When I disembarked from the river-boat at Jacksonville, she was no more. It seemed that I had suffered a sea change. I was not Zora of Orange County any more, I was now a little colored girl. I found it out in certain ways. In my heart as well as in the mirror, I became a fast brown--warranted not to rub nor run.

But I am not tragically colored. There is no great sorrow dammed up in my soul, nor lurking behind my eyes. I do not mind at all. I do not belong to the sobbing school of Negrohood who hold that nature somehow has given them a lowdown dirty deal and whose feelings are all but about it. Even in the helter-skelter skirmish that is my life, I have seen that the world is to the strong regardless of a little pigmentation more or less. No, I do not weep at the world--I am too busy sharpening my oyster knife.

Someone is always at my elbow reminding me that I am the granddaughter of slaves. It fails to register depression with me. Slavery is sixty years in the past. The operation was successful and the patient is doing well, thank you. The terrible struggle that made me an American out of a potential slave said "On the line!" The Reconstruction said "Get set!" and the generation before said "Go!" I am off to a flying start and I must not halt in the stretch to look behind and weep. Slavery is the price I paid for civilization, and the choice was not with me. It is a bully adventure and worth all that I have paid through my ancestors for it. No one on earth ever had

a greater chance for glory. The world to be won and nothing to be lost. It is thrilling to think--to know that for any act of mine, I shall get twice as much praise or twice as much blame. It is quite exciting to hold the center of the national stage, with the spectators not knowing whether to laugh or to weep.

The position of my white neighbor is much more difficult. No brown specter pulls up a chair beside me when I sit down to eat. No dark ghost thrusts its leg against mine in bed. The game of keeping what one has is never so exciting as the game of getting.

I do not always feel colored. Even now I often achieve the unconscious Zora of Eatonville before the Hegira. I feel most colored when I am thrown against a sharp white background.

For instance at Barnard. "Beside the waters of the Hudson" I feel my race. Among the thousand white persons, I am a dark rock surged upon, and overswept, but through it all, I remain myself. When covered by the waters, I am; and the ebb but reveals me again.

Sometimes it is the other way around. A white person is set down in our midst, but the contrast is just as sharp for me. For instance, when I sit in the drafty basement that is The New World Cabaret with a white person, my color comes. We enter chatting about any little nothing that we have in common and are seated by the jazz waiters. In the abrupt way that jazz orchestras have, this one plunges into a number. It loses no time in circumlocutions, but gets right down to business. It constricts the thorax and splits the heart with its tempo and narcotic harmonies. This orchestra grows rambunctious, rears on its hind legs and attacks the tonal veil with primitive fury, rending it, clawing it until it breaks through to the jungle beyond. I follow those heathen--follow them exultingly. I dance wildly inside myself; I yell within, I whoop; I shake my assegai above my head, I hurl it true to the mark yeeeeooww! I am in the jungle and living in the jungle way. My face is painted red and yellow and my body is painted blue. My pulse is throbbing like a war drum. I want to slaughter something--give pain, give death to what, I do not know. But the piece ends. The men of the orchestra wipe their lips and rest their fingers. I creep

back slowly to the veneer we call civilization with the last tone and find the white friend sitting motionless in his seat, smoking calmly.

"Good music they have here," he remarks, drumming the table with his fingertips.

Music. The great blobs of purple and red emotion have not touched him. He has only heard what I felt. He is far away and I see him but dimly across the ocean and the continent that have fallen between us. He is so pale with his whiteness then and I am so colored.

At certain times I have no race, I am me. When I set my hat at a certain angle and saunter down Seventh Avenue, Harlem City, feeling as snooty as the lions in front of the Forty-Second Street Library, for instance. So far as my feelings are concerned, Peggy Hopkins Joyce on the Boule Mich with her gorgeous raiment, stately carriage, knees knocking together in a most aristocratic manner, has nothing on me. The cosmic Zora emerges. I belong to no race nor time. I am the eternal feminine with its string of beads.

I have no separate feeling about being an American citizen and colored. I am merely a fragment of the Great Soul that surges within the boundaries. My country, right or wrong.

Sometimes, I feel discriminated against, but it does not make me angry. It merely astonishes me. How can any deny themselves the pleasure of my company? It's beyond me.

But in the main, I feel like a brown bag of miscellany propped against a wall. Against a wall in company with other bags, white, red and yellow. Pour out the contents, and there is discovered a jumble of small things priceless and worthless. A first-water diamond, an empty spool, bits of broken glass, lengths of string, a key to a door long since crumbled away, a rusty knife-blade, old shoes saved for a road that never was and never will be, a nail bent under the weight of things too heavy for any nail, a dried flower or two still a little fragrant. In your hand is the brown bag. On the ground before you is the jumble it held--so much like the jumble in the bags, could they be emptied, that all might be dumped in a single heap and the bags refilled without altering the content of any greatly. A bit of colored glass more or less would

not matter. Perhaps that is how the Great Stuffer of Bags filled them in the first place--who knows?

I'm a Banana and Proud of It

Wayson Choy

Because both my parents came from China, I took Chinese. But I cannot read or write Chinese and barely speak it. I love my North American citizenship. I don't mind being called a "banana," yellow on the outside and white inside. I'm proud I'm a banana. After all, in Canada and the United States, native Indians are "apples" (red outside, white inside); blacks are "Oreo cookies" (black and white); and Chinese are "bananas." These metaphors assume, both rightly and wrongly, that the culture here has been primarily Anglo-white. Cultural history made me a banana.

History: My father and mother arrived separately to the British Columbia coast in the early part of the century. They came as unwanted "aliens." Better to be an alien here than to be dead of starvation in China. But after the Chinese Exclusion laws were passed in North America (late 1800s, early 1900s), no Chinese immigrants were granted citizenship in either Canada or United States.

Like those Old China village men from *Toi San* who, in the 1850s, laid down cliff-edge train tracks through the Rockies and the Sierras, or like those first women who came as mail-order wives or concubines and who as bond-slaves were turned into cheaper laborers or even prostitutes-like many of those men and women, my father and mother survived ugly, unjust times. In 1918, two hours after he got off the boat from Hong Kong, my father was called "chink" and told to go back to China. "Chink" is a hateful racist term, stereotyping the shape of Asian eyes: "a chink in the armor," an undesirable slit. For the Elders, the past was humiliating. Eventually, the Second World War changed hostile attitudes toward the Chinese.

During the war, Chinese men volunteered and lost their lives as members of the American-and Canadian military. When hostilities ended, many more were proudly in uniform waiting to go overseas. Record Chinatown dollars were raised to buy War Bonds. After 1945, challenged by much money and ultimate sacrifices, the Exclusion

laws in both Canada and the United States were revoked. Chinatown residents claimed their citizenship and sent for their families. By 1949, after the Communists took over China, those of use who arrived here as young children, or were born here, stayed. No longer "aliens," we became legal citizens of North America. Many of us also became "bananas."

Historically; "banana" is not a racist term. Although it clumsily stereotypes many of the children and grandchildren of the Old Chinatowns, the term actually follows the old Chinese tendency to assign endearing nicknames to replace formal names, semicomical names to keep one humble. Thus, "banana" describes the generations who assimilated so well into North American life. In fact, our families encouraged members of my generation in the 1950s and sixties to "get ahead," to get an English education, to get a job with good pay and prestige. "Don't work like me," Chinatown parents said. "Work in an office!" The *lao wahkiu* (the Chinatown old-timers) also warned, "Never forget -you still be Chinese!"

None of us ever forgot. The mirror never lied.

Many Chinatown teenagers felt we didn't quite belong in anyone world. We looked Chinese, but thought and behaved North American. Impatient Chinatown parents wanted the best of both worlds-for us, but they bluntly labeled their children and grandchildren "*juk-sing*" or even "*mo no*." Not that we were totally "shallow bamboo butt-ends" or entirely "no brain," but we had less and less understanding of Old China traditions, and less and less interest in their village histories. Father used to say we lacked Taoist ritual, Taoist manners. We were, he said, "*mo li*."

This was true. Chinatown's younger brains, like everyone else's of whatever race, were being colonized by "white bread" U.S. family television programs. We began to feel Chinese home life was inferior. We co-operated with English-language magazines that showed us how to act and what to buy. Seductive Hollywood movies made some of us secretly weep that we did not have movie-star faces. American music made Chinese music sound like noise. By the 1970s and eighties, many of us had consciously or unconsciously distanced ourselves from our Chinatown histories. We became bananas.

Finally, for me, in my 40s or 50s, with the death first of my mother, then my father, I realized I did not belong anywhere unless I could understand the past. I needed to find the foundation of my Chinese-ness. I need roots.

I spent my college holidays researching the past. I read Chinatown oral histories, located documents, searched out early articles. Those early citizens came back to life for me. Their long toil and blood sacrifices, the proud record of their patient, legal challenges, gave us all our present rights as citizens. Canadian and American Chinatowns set aside their family tongue differences and encouraged each other to fight injustice. There were no borders. "After all," they affirmed, "*Daaih ga tohng yahn....* We are all Chinese! "

In my book, *The Jade Peony*, I tried to recreate this past, to explore the beginnings of the conflicts trapped within myself, the struggle between being Chinese and being North American. I discovered a truth: these "between world" struggles are universal. In every human being, there is "the Other" -something that makes each of us feel how different we are from everyone else, even family members. Yet-ironically, we are all the same, wanting the same security and happiness. I know this now.

I think the early Chinese pioneers actually started "going bananas" from the moment they first settled upon the West Coast. They had no choice. They adapted. They initiated assimilation. If they had not, they and their family would have starved to death. I might even suggest that all surviving Chinatown citizens eventually became bananas. Only some, of course, were more ripe than others.

That's why I'm proudly a banana: I accept the paradox of being both Chinese and not Chinese. Now at last, whenever I look in the mirror or hear ghost voices shouting, "You still Chinese!", I smile. I know another truth: In immigrant North America, we are all Chinese.

Sample Final Exam

FINAL EXAM

Choose ONE of the questions below. Write your response in an essay, with an introduction, a well-developed body, and a conclusion. Make use of both paraphrase and direct quotation, giving attribution to the author when using direct quotes. Use the entire test period to organize your thoughts, write your essay, and revise and edit your work.

1. In their essays, both Zora Neale Hurston and Wayson Choy recount how their cultural history influenced their adaptation to the dominant culture. Compare and contrast the ways Choy and Hurston used their cultural experiences and sense of "color" to develop a positive self-image that facilitated assimilation into their respective cultures.
2. Zora Neale Hurston's essay can be described as an exercise in the creation of an evolving self or identity. Explain how experiences in her life helped shape who she becomes.
3. In the last sentence of his essay, Wayson Choy writes, "In immigrant North America, we are all Chinese." What life experiences led him to this position? To what extent does Choy's statement reflect your own observations,

Faculty Tips for Lesson Development

Instructors can introduce essays or newspaper or magazine articles that will stimulate in-class writing and discussion. Both pre-writes and free-writes are low stakes informal writing exercises. Pre-writes are designed to access prior student knowledge before engaging and writing about more demanding materials. Free-writes are often stand-alone exercises. We would like to offer special thanks to Robert Waddell for the work he did gathering these tips and suggestions.

Some Writing Exercise Suggestions, by Elyse Zucker

ICEBREAKERS

- Focused free-writing (in response to a theme or prompt)
- Answering a prompt that allows students to write about their own personal experience on a topic that will be covered in class (for instance, in relation to a unit on disabilities, a prompt could be *How do you respond when you come in close proximity with someone who has a visible disability? Or How do people with visible disabilities get handled in public places?*)
- Read a quote to the students from the selection assigned and ask them to write in response to it.
- Ask a thought provoking question about the theme, possibly relating it to a current event

IN THE TEXT WRITING EXERCISES

- Double or triple journal entry, best done in groups (make an assertion, give evidence for it and interpret it; or choose a quote and analyze it)
- Have students create questions, identify what type they are, and answer them
- Have students create questions for other groups to answer
- Questions that compare thematically or in form another selection assigned

CLOSURE WRITING (FOR THE END OF THE CLASS)

- Journal entries
- Summaries of salient points learned and/or questions or comments (can be either kept by students or passed to the instructor)
- Identify the essential ideas about the selection or the lesson

IDEAS FOR FACILITATING ESSAY THESES

- Looping

- Focused free-writing
- Clustering
- List making
- IDEAS FOR HELPING STUDENTS IMPLEMENT RESEARCH
- Give students a piece of research after finishing the essay assigned and have them, in groups, identify sections of the research that relate to a theme or point or claim they themselves are making that is in the essay

Pre-writes

- Describe in detail a place that is important to you. (“My Childhood on the Continent of Africa” by David Sedaris, pg. 291)
- Write about a person, living or dead, historical or personal, who has influenced your life. (“The Miss Dennis School of Writing” by Alice Steinbach, pg. 57)
- What is Knowledge? What is it? Where does it come from? Where does it go? (Plato’s “The Cave.”)
- (“The Evo Devo Revolution” by Sean B. Carroll, pg. 327 or “The Growing Cowardice of Online Anonymity” by Richard Bernstein, pg. 349)
- Write 3 paragraphs; one paragraph describes your life at 5 years of age, at 10 and at 15. “Once More to the Lake” by E.B. White, pg. 473)
- Dr. King writes of just laws and unjust laws in “Letter from a Birmingham Jail.” What, in your opinion, is a just or an unjust law? If you’re a law abiding citizen, how do you justify breaking an unjust law? (I Have a Dream by Martin Luther King, pg. 481)
- What is Freedom? Where does it come from? (“The Declaration of Independence” by Thomas Jefferson, pg. 449)
- Describe an important historical event that has occurred in your lifetime. (Barak Obama’s Inaugural Address, pg. 390 and/or Abraham Lincoln’s “Second Inaugural Address,” pg. 465)
- If you could live anywhere else in the world, where would you live? (“Like Mexicans” by Gary Soto, pg. 276)

- “Evil flourishes when good men do nothing.” What does that statement mean to you? (“A View from the Bridge by Cherokee Paul McDonald,” pg 52, or “The Island of Plenty” by Johnson C. Montgomery, pg. 399)
- Is Capital Punishment a crime? (“Chronicle of an American Execution by Dan Barry,” pg. 66)
- Can you explain an act of courage that you’ve seen in your life? What does courage or to be courageous mean to you? (“Two Churches, Black and White” by Michael Powell, pg. 268, or “The Back of the Bus by Mary Mebane,” pg. 120)
- What is honor? What do you think it means to live honorably? (“Grant and Lee: A Study in Contrasts” by Bruce Catton, pg. 259)
- What is the most ridiculous or funny thing you’ve ever done? (“The Six Stages of Email” by Nora Ephron, pg. 181, or “Guys vs. Men” by Dave Barry, pg. 309)
- If “all men are created equal,” why did it take almost 100 years for women to gain the right to vote and why weren’t slave immediately freed in 1776? (“Gender in the Classroom” by Deborah Tannen, pg. 282)
- What’s the best way to sustain and maintain a lasting and positive relationship? (“Orange Crush” by Yiyun Li, pg. 110)
- Is the use of torture by any government ever justified? “Should Batman Kill the Joker? By Mark D. White and Robert Arp, pg. 404
- There have been a lot of super hero films – *The Avengers*, *Batman*, *Spider-Man*, and *Captain America* – What does this say about American culture? What are we looking for? Does heroism only reside in fictional characters like Iron Man and the X-Men? (“The Ashen Guy: Lower Broadway, September 11, 2001” by Thomas Beller, pg. 93)
- How is your life different from your parent’s lives? When you use the expression “back in the day,” what does that mean? When was that? (“Always Living in Spanish” by Marjorie Agosin, pg. 371)

Free-Writes

- Write a paragraph or more about what you hope to learn this semester in English 110 (beginning of semester exercise)

- Describe a technological or scientific breakthrough that has touched or changed your life.
- Write a letter to someone that you will never send. You don't have to use real names.
- In relationships, what's the difference between men and women?
- How strong should immigration laws be in the United States?
- Write a paragraph or more about what you have learned this semester in English 110. List 3 new pieces of knowledge that you have so far acquired. What you enjoyed? What you would have changed? (end of semester exercise)

Teaching Grammar, by Elyse Zucker

Teach grammar by copying over students' grammatical and sentence structure level errors (be sure to delete their names!) on a separate sheet of paper and have the students work in pairs to make the corrections, while identifying what the errors are (run-ons, subject/verb errors, etc). Have students/pairs of students take turns sharing their answers. Use an abbreviation code and distribute to students (S/V, RO, CS, SF, etc). For tense errors, have students write the misused verb in 3 sentences: one each illustrating the verb in the past, present and future tense usage.

Teaching Writing, by Renee Iweriebor

Encourage students to explore their own reading and writing processes and express their opinions about issues discussed in various reading assignments.

Writing and reading appear to be abstract activities to many students. From my observations most come in with the view that writing is only necessary to pass tests and fulfill institutional requirements. Thus they do not feel a connection to their writing. They focus on the pattern of grades they get for writing and or reading and tend to describe themselves as "not liking" either activity, or as being "poor" at executing them. In the questionnaire I administer at the beginning of the semester, they frequently express the desire to "improve" their writing. From the beginning, many exhibit symptoms of writer's block and worry that they may not know anything about the topics they may be asked to write about.

Encouraging them to explore their own reading, writing and even language acquisition helps them begin to think of themselves as writers with ideas to express. Encouraging them to express their opinions freely helps them feel validated. I have found that they become more interested in writing, and as the semester progresses they actually exhibit signs that they are beginning to enjoy writing. While the issues with the mechanics of writing – essay structure, sentence structure, spelling, subject verb agreement, tenses etc. take some time to be worked out, their output increases such that by the time we get to the research paper, some students are able to generate appropriately sophisticated work.

Assignments That Can Support This Strategy

A comparison of views about the writings of three to four “experts in the field.” These are usually authors of writing books, such as Thomas Cooley, Jane Aaron, William Zinsser, Somerset Maughn or anyone who has published work about writing. Specifically, the students are asked to discuss how the advice and observations proffered by these “experts” relate to their experience.

Free writing in the form of responses to the readings in which they express their opinions of the readings. These responses may start off as simple as “It was a boring read” with the intention that by the end of the semester student responses will have become much more complex examinations of the article.

Holding Students Accountable for Homework Assignments, by Daniel Casey

I think it is a good idea to assign a small amount of writing with every reading assignment, something that the teacher can quickly check for completion at the beginning of class. It sounds a bit "high school," I know, but I have found that it really does improve the quality of class discussions about the readings, if only because it increases the quantity of students who are prepared to participate in the discussion. If homework completion records are kept and factored into the semester grade, students will do more of the reading homework. In my 110 class, for example, 20% of the semester grade (20 points out of 100, total) is for attendance, preparedness (homework completion), and participation. Each student needs to earn 20 points for that portion of the grade. To earn one point, a student must do three things: come to class, and arrive on time, with homework complete. To earn all 20 points, a student must do those three things 20 times. A class meets closer to 30 times per semester, so that leaves plenty of room for a few "freebies"--a late arrival here, an illness there, whatever--and then I don't have to get into excused vs. unexcused absences, etc., etc.

Walk around the room at the beginning of class, with your grade book, and check to see that students have completed their homework. It takes about five minutes to do this. Holding students accountable for the reading assignments improves class discussions, because you can call on the students who come with their homework finished. And then the students are better prepared for the essay assignments, because they've done the readings, and they've already done a little bit of writing about each of the readings.

To demonstrate that they've done the reading, I've tried two things with English 110 classes which work just fine, and another technique with my CLIP classes that could be used in English 110, with some advanced planning.

Comparison and Contrast, by Susan Dicker

Here is a model for writing an essay in which two reading selections are compared and/or contrasted:

INTRODUCTION: A statement of the main idea, mentioning both essays A and B and authors A and B. Indicate whether the essays will be compared and/or contrasted.

BODY:

Paragraph 1: (1) A statement of one similarity/difference:

One similarity [difference] between the essays [the authors] is...

(2) A statement about essay A:

Author A explains/describes/writes...

(3) A sentence with a quote from essay A, illustrating the point made in (2)

(4) A statement about essay B, referring to the point made in

(2):

Begin the sentence *Similar to Essay A [Author A], Essay B [Author B].....or In contrast to Essay A [Author A], Essay B [Author B] ...*

(5) A sentence with a quote from Essay B, illustrating the point made in (4)

Paragraphs 2, 3, etc: duplicate the first paragraph. Begin: *A second [third] [final] similarity [difference] is...*

CONCLUSION: A restatement of the main theme. A brief statement of your own opinion is possible.

Note #1: This framework is just a suggestion. You don't have to use this exact model all the time. One variation is to reverse the order of sentences 2 and 3 (and 4 and 5): give the quote first, then a statement of your own explaining the author's point. As you become more comfortable with writing an essay of this kind, you can come up with your own variations. For example, you may begin a paragraph: *Both Author A and Author B...*

Note #2: Each point of similarity or difference should be *different from* and *more specific than* the main idea.

Example: If the main idea is that *The authors Mohammed Yunus and Richard Wolkomir are people who helped others*, one specific similarity may be *Each of them learns something new in the process of helping others*. Don't repeat the point that both authors helped other people as a specific point of similarity.

Sample Essay by an ENG 110 student, Ruta Jakutyte

In the essays "Kitchens" by Aurora Levins Morales and "Innocence Lost: Our Complicated Relationship with Food" by Jeremy Iggers, the authors' points of view on the relationship between people and food are similar in three ways.

One similarity between the essays is that both authors write about food as a pleasing thing. In her essay, Morales reveals her attitude to food by showing how she feels about making food. The writer describes making food as a pleasant experience. She writes, "I find a small curved green bunch [of bananas] to rush home, quick, before it ripens, to peel and boil, bathing in the scent of its cooking" (Morales 72). Iggers explains that we should give up the guilt of food and enjoy it with our families and friends, because eating is a social activity. He writes, "Whether it's...a block party or a family reunion, when we gather together to celebrate...even the simplest fare can seem rich in our mouths and our memories – without tasting the least bit sinful" (Iggers 255).

A second similarity between the two writers is that they both have a positive attitude about how people felt about food in the past. Morales feels proud of her ancestors and her living relatives and the way they loved cooking. She describes cooking as "a magic, a power, a ritual of love and work that rises up in my kitchen, thousands of miles from those women in cotton dresses who twenty years ago taught the rules of its observance to me" (Morales 72). Iggers writes, "There was a time...when eating was a simple pleasure, and Americans tackled it with less sophistication, and more gusto, than anyone else in the world" (Iggers 252). The author explains that in the past there was less emphasis on food, and people enjoyed food as one of the pleasures of life.

A third similarity is that Morales and Iggers write about “stain” in a figurative way to explain people’s relationship to food. Morales writes about the stain of peeling green bananas that marks a person forever, and relates that stain to a memory of her ancestors. The writer explains, “So I peel my bananas under running water from the faucet, but the stain won’t come out, and the green smell of that sap follows me, down from the mountains, into the cities” (Morales 72). Iggers states that “there is hardly an element in the American diet that doesn’t carry some moral stain” (Iggers 251). The author explains that people’s morality has become concentrated on food and that, nowadays, people hardly feel guilty about anything else except eating food.

In conclusion, the essays by Aurora Levins Morales and Jeremy Iggers offer similar points of view about the relationship people have with food. Both authors write about food as a pleasing thing, show a positive attitude about how people felt about food in the past, and write about “stain” in a figurative way. The ideas of both authors one more time prove that food is an indivisible part of a human’s life.

Note #3: Notice that the author does not repeat the word “another” when moving to the next point of similarity. Instead, she uses the expressions “one similarity,” “a second similarity,” and “a third similarity.”

Note #4: If you include both similarities and differences, write first about the similarities, then about the differences.

A Group Exercise for “Our Complicated Relationship with Food”, by Susan Dicker

Write three sentences paraphrasing an aspect of the problem that Iggers describes. Follow each sentence with a quote to support the point Iggers makes.

Example: The media bombards the public with food arranged to look sexy. Iggers writes, “Today, it’s hard to turn on the television or open a magazine without encountering sensuous, glistening images of food” (Iggers 252).

Then write two sentences paraphrasing an aspect of the solution to the problem, according to Iggers. Follow each of these sentences with a quote to support the point.