

**MIAMI UNIVERSITY
BEST OF PORTFOLIOS 2004**

EDITOR – SHAWNA RUSHFORD
ASSISTANT EDITOR – DAVID MARADO

EDITORIAL BOARD – ANGELA WEAVER, MICHELE POLACK, DAVID SCHLOSS,
LISA SHAVER, CINDY LEWIECKI-WILSON

**MIAMI UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
OXFORD, OHIO 45056**

port • fo • lio

1. a hinged cover or flexible case for carrying loose papers, pictures or pamphlets
2. a set of writings on various and sundry topics chosen to show a writer's best work
3. a cool way to earn college credit

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In 1990, Miami University became the first institution of higher learning to award students college credit and advanced placement based on a collection of their best high school writing. Few universities across the country present first-year students with the opportunity to receive advanced credit by submitting a portfolio; Miami's program is unique, and we hope you take advantage of it.

The Miami University Portfolio Writing Program was established by Laurel Black, Don Daiker, Jeffrey Sommers, and Gail Stygall in order to value and encourage high school writing and to provide a fairer way of evaluating it than the standard timed placement examinations. The success of the program owes much to the continuing support of Keith Tuma, Chair of the English Department; former Chairs, Diane Sadoff and C. Barry Chabot; Cynthia Lewiecki-Wilson, College Composition Director; and former Directors, Diana Royer, Jennie Dautermann, Mary Fuller, John Heyda, Susan Jarratt, and Max Morenberg.

Five outstanding secondary English teachers helped create the portfolio program: Marilyn Elzey of Talwanda High School in Oxford; D.J. Hammond of Madeira High School in Cincinnati; John Kuehn of Kettering Fairmont High School; Teri Phillips of Mt. Healthy High School; Bob Disney of Fairfield High School; Teresa McGowan of Hamilton High School; and Penni Meyer and Sharon Rab of Kettering Fairmont High School.

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For their hard work and dedication, we thank the Portfolio Coordinating Committee: Don Daiker (Director), Cristy Beemer, Moira Casey, Michele Polak, David Schloss, Brian Seidman, Lisa Shaver, Angela Weaver, Kari Sommers, and Cindy Lewiecki-Wilson.

We also appreciate the work of colleagues who helped read and evaluated the portfolios: Angela Storey, Dominic Micer, Rhoda Cairns, Del Beaudry, Amie Fletcher, William Orth, Meg Bickerstaff, Del Beaudry, and Christy Carnes.

We are grateful for the assistance of the English Department secretaries: Jackie Kearns, Debbie Morner, and especially Trudi Nixon.

Finally, we thank all of the dedicated high school English teachers who have given their students the time, opportunity, and motivation to work on the various kinds of writing that a portfolio requires. In both their reflective letters and personal correspondence, participating students frequently share the appreciation they feel for these teachers whose classrooms have made a difference in their lives as writers—and as people.

INTRODUCTION

Creating this portfolio almost two months after I wrote each of the original essays allowed me to revise freely without feeling attached to the old versions of the pieces. While these revisions are a direct representation of where I am in my writing at this very moment, these drafts are not final. In my writing, no draft is ever final. I refuse to believe that my work is perfect, and hopefully this belief will mold me into a better writer than the one who has created the following pieces.

I created my first piece, the personal narrative, with a college admissions board in mind. The assignment given in class was to write an essay telling something unique about myself. The assignment I gave myself was to show the admissions office something they hadn't seen on every application and to give them a break from "I'm a compassionate person. I'm a member of seventy-seven volunteer organizations, and, for this reason, I feel I would benefit your school community." While my first draft didn't accomplish both assignments given (the one from my instructor and the one from myself), the piece included in this portfolio—my tenth draft if I'm counting correctly—is as close as I've gotten.

Tiffany Fickenscher, Reflective Letter

We chose Tiffany Fickenscher's Reflective Letter to feature in *The Best of Miami Portfolios* because she so persuasively convinced her audience of college English instructors that she understands her own writing process, the multiple purposes and audiences for a piece of writing, and the many considerations that shape a revision. As you can see from this short excerpt from her Reflective Letter, Tiffany describes how important it is to improve drafts through many revisions and to gain a bit of distance in order to "revise freely without feeling attached to the old versions." She conveys her writing awareness with modesty, combining a direct voice with a touch of self-deprecation. "I refuse to believe that my work is perfect," she writes. When Tiffany tells us that her tenth draft is as close as she can get—for now—to her dual purposes of satisfying both the admissions' essay genre and her own goal to push that genre away from the usual stereotypes of self-representation, she establishes *ethos*. She creates credibility as a writer by articulating her dual goals, though she may fall short of them, and communicates a sense of a person on the page, imagining and connecting with her audience, a trait that is often called "voice" in writing.

Tiffany demonstrates many of the elements of writing valued at Miami—from knowing how to draft, get feedback on, and revise writing; to understanding how audience, purpose, and form shape writing; to reflecting on ways to establish credibility and develop different textual voices suited to particular contexts and purposes. These elements are central to the first-year Composition Program at Miami University and the Portfolio Program. A portfolio provides incoming first-year students the opportunity not only to demonstrate their skill and depth as writers now, but also their potential to grow as future college writers. We value writing instruction at the college level and know that all students can benefit from a college writing course, but we recognize that some students are already writing at a very high level and may be deserving of accelerated placement by submitting a portfolio for credit. Over the last dozen years we have averaged 300-400 portfolios submitted for credit out of entering first-year classes of about 3000 students. Over these years, about 40-50 % of portfolios submitted earned either 3 or 6 hours of credit.

We encourage students to submit portfolios as early after admission as possible so that they may learn whether they have earned credit for some or all of the two course, first-year

composition sequence. In 2005 we will accept portfolios from February 1 to June 20. All portfolios are evaluated by at least two readers who teach first-year composition according to a six-point scoring scale (the 2004 Scoring Guide is reprinted in the Appendix). A portfolio rated “very good” or “excellent” (“5” or “6” on the scoring scale) earns six credits in college composition and completely fulfills the university writing requirements. A portfolio rated “good” (“4” on the scoring scale) earns three credits in college composition as well as advanced placement into English 113. A portfolio rated “3,” “2,” or “1” on the scoring scale means the student will enroll for two semesters of college composition. You will learn the results of your portfolio scores within three to four weeks of submission. (See the 2005 Portfolio Submission Information at the back of this book.)

The Best of Miami University’s Portfolios 2004 consists of **three complete portfolios and selections from twelve others**. A complete portfolio consists of four pieces: 1. A reflective letter introducing the author and the portfolio; 2. A narrative or short story; 3. An explanatory, exploratory or persuasive essay; 4. A response to a text. **There are three student samples for each of these categories**. Each section, as well as the one containing complete portfolios, is prefaced with an introduction explaining why Portfolio Committee members evaluated it so highly.

The process of creating a writing portfolio involves selecting and revising pieces, as well as thinking about how the selections fit together to demonstrate the writer’s skill and knowledge of writing. We chose the following portfolios and essays for *The Best of Portfolios 2004* because they exemplify the processes of careful thinking and revising, which lead to pieces that address a specific audience and achieve a purpose with articulate voice and style. These exemplary essays and portfolios in *The Best of Miami University’s Portfolios 2004* offer many approaches to writing, but should not be used simply as templates or models. We hope these pieces challenge future writers to explore dynamic styles of writing and new subjects.

While creating a portfolio requires an investment of time, the endeavor is worthwhile not only for the potential it affords of earning college credit but also for the valuable writing experience it promotes. Students will likely be required to compile portfolios in college. Portfolios encourage authors to approach texts with an eye to revision and permit readers to experience the many facets of a particular writer’s abilities. *The Best of Miami University’s Portfolios* is meant to encourage all writers to produce and submit what they feel is their best work.

In composing your portfolio and in your college writing, we hope that you will agree with Tiffany Fickenscher that “no draft is ever final.” We hope that you see writing as a lifelong endeavor and that you keep writing—in college and beyond.

Cynthia Lewiecki-Wilson
Director of Composition for the Portfolio Committee

REFLECTIVE LETTER

The reflective letter, addressed to Miami University writing teachers, sets the tone for the portfolio by introducing both the writer and the individual pieces. Readers are not expecting a narrative of your experiences and growth as a writer but rather, evidence of the critical reflection used in assembling and producing the portfolio. To that end, most useful letters explicitly introduce the pieces and explain the purpose and audience for each piece. Both creative and more traditional letters of introduction are acceptable.

The reflective letter is an important element of the portfolio, as it is the first piece of the portfolio that will be read. This portion of the portfolio offers you the opportunity to introduce yourself and your writing to the reader. While your letter will help you to establish connections for your readers among the other components of your portfolio, it also offers your reader some idea about the rhetorical choices you have made in constructing each piece of writing, including the purpose and audience for each work and the portfolio as a whole.

There are many approaches to the reflective letter, but some of the strongest letters contain evidence of the critical reflection put into assembling the portfolio. In her reflective letter, Tiffany Fickenscher provides evidence that she looked and looked again at drafts written previously when she writes: “Rediscovering each of these different pieces and gathering them into this portfolio allowed me to take an objective look at my writing, a look from your position perhaps.” In looking at the works of her portfolio, this time acutely aware of her audience, Tiffany was able to reflect and revise to make her writing stronger.

Often, students characterize the ways in which they have reflected on and revised the individual pieces of writing they include in their portfolios. While you may have written some of the writing you include in your portfolio early in high school, you are compiling your portfolio at the end. Most likely, you have become a more mature and sophisticated writer in the meantime. In her reflective letter, Elizabeth Manos writes about the revision process. She notes that her essay “The Escape” was originally “a descriptive essay for my Research and Exposition class. I added several scenes, some dialogue, and more personal narration.”

Shannon Berner takes a creative approach to writing her reflective letter. She utilizes an informal tone and a decisive style in order to contextualize the individual pieces of her portfolio. Shannon wants her readers to understand why she chooses certain pieces and why she leaves others out. She admits that “Compiling a portfolio is a difficult task for me, because if I had my choice, I would submit all creative works.” However, Shannon realizes that she needs to include different pieces in her portfolio in order to reflect various writing purposes. Indeed, your letter should give your readers an idea of the choices you have made in your composition process, whether it reflects the ways in which you piece the elements of your portfolio together or the process by which you chose to approach revision. The overall goal is to offer your readers an insight into the critical thinking and critical awareness you have used in your composing process.

REFLECTIVE LETTER—TIFFANY FICKENSCHER

Dear Miami University Writing Faculty,

“When you write a book, you spend day after day scanning and identifying the trees. When you’re done, you have to step back and look at the forest,” states Stephen King in his memoir, *On Writing*. Such is my writing portfolio: a forest of information compiled from the best foliage I have cultivated. Sure the trees have been pruned (edited) and fertilized (enhanced) throughout the growing process, but the key to my success as a writer is dedication.

What started out as number three on my summer to-do list—right after “read Phillips’ *Crossing the River*”—turned into a magical experience, mystifying and captivating. Rediscovering each of these different pieces and gathering them into this portfolio allowed me to take an objective look at my writing, a look from your position perhaps. While I could remember the long stressful nights, staying up to perfect each draft, the pieces seemed detached from me. Although I could identify the writing as my own—the phrasing, the diction, and the tone—this opportunity enabled me to view my own pieces with fresh eyes. In this same memoir, King states, “It is always easier to kill someone else’s darlings than it is to kill your own.” Creating this portfolio almost two months after I wrote each of the original essays allowed me to revise freely without feeling attached to the old versions of the pieces. While these revisions are a direct representation of where I am in my writing at this very moment, these drafts are not final. In my writing, no draft is ever final. I refuse to believe that my work is perfect, and hopefully this belief will mold me into a better writer than the one who has created the following pieces.

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The second piece I have included, the multi-genre persuasive paper, was the hardest to write. After finishing a traditional persuasive paper with the purpose of making public smoking bans a state law, the instructor gave the assignment to use several different genres to bring across the same implicit theme. Excited at the thought of bringing in multiple opinions inspired by real-life sources, I started typing my first genre piece that evening and finished my first draft of the project six hours later.

Unfortunately, because of page limitations I wasn’t able to include all the pieces from my original multi-genre project in this portfolio. Among the pieces missing include a narrative to follow-up the obituary (included) and a poster displaying smoking facts and support groups for families of affected children. If I have met my initial goal, the pieces I have included should come together to form the same universal idea, even with some pieces missing. After all, this portfolio is only a glimpse of my writing.

I wrote my final included piece, my response to a text, after reading Fyodor Dostoyevsky’s *Crime and Punishment*. The right to take lives, a central idea in the novel, contradicts values I have held my entire life. In this reader-response essay, I identify how this novel has changed my

thinking on the issues of criminal psychology. So often in writing about idea-themes, point of view essays, and literary response papers, writers get so caught up in point of view, diction, tone (the trees of reading) that they don't ever step back and look at the forest—how all the different elements come together to create a response from the reader. This essay explores the response I had to the ideas in the novel.

I hope you learn as much about me during your reading process as I did about myself during the writing. This really was a rewarding experience. When I first started, the audience was you—now it's you and me.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my work

Sincerely,

Anonymous

REFLECTIVE LETTER—ELIZABETH MANOS

Dear Viewers,

I am hesitant to even begin this work. There is so much to express to convey my emotions, thoughts, and hopes. The task of translating thoughts that stem from one neuron to the next to a masterpiece of black blobs on a piece of manufactured paper, that somehow evoke meaning and interpretation can be quite daunting. Equally challenging is captivating the viewers attention. All thoughts are not always instantaneously transposed into a masterpiece of black blobs. Some blobs have an unfortunate lot and are simply unable to find their place among the many others. Occasionally, rather than becoming acquainted with viewers, these tainted pieces are rejected. However, several of my pieces have received hours of special attention. Hopefully you will find them worthy of display.

My first piece in this artistic collection is titled, “The Escape.” Originally, this work was a descriptive essay for my Research and Exposition class. I added several scenes, some dialogue, and more personal narration. I gained inspiration for this work from the chaos that always seems to consume my exit from school. Each situation throughout my “escape” occurred over the two years I drove to school. The situations I encountered may seem over-dramatized or atypical of a story but actually reflect my diverse high school experiences. In addition, this narrative gives you a glimpse of the type of student I am and how I react to frustrating situations.

My second piece is titled, “A New Race to Come.” I wrote this work in my sophomore English class for my research assignment. This piece discusses the negative aspects that could result if human genetic engineering is conducted. I originally picked this topic because I thrive in science. I love every investigative aspect of new discoveries, but I can also perceive when a discovery could be detrimental to society. I found myself, on revising the works I included in my portfolio, adding a lot of thoughts that I have developed over the past couple of years.

My last piece is titled, “One life to Live.” This essay analyzes the theme of the novel, *The Awakening*. This was my favorite novel that I read in my AP literature class this past year. In my essay, I explain how personal freedom is a critical component to the novel.

While I can be my hardest critic, I know I have much to learn. I have done my best to use all my skills to produce this portfolio. Ultimately, this portfolio rests in your hands. It is my hope that you will be kept easily intrigued, so I may be granted your patronage.

With thanks,

A young literary artist

REFLECTIVE LETTER—SHANNON BERNER

Dear Tired, Bored Portfolio Graders,

How are you doing? I am just fine, how very kind of you to ask! I think it is safe to assume that by the time you are reading my portfolio, you have probably had enough of grading. You are in luck, however, because I was going to send you a very boring essay on *Hamlet* (just for kicks), but I decided against it. I actually had a much harder time putting together this portfolio than I had initially anticipated. Not only has writing been difficult for me because my mind is a Neanderthal who just won't stop wandering, but also because I always feel a sense of suffocation when I sit down to write an assignment. My creativity is always stifled by a strong army of intros, conclusions, topic sentences and their many rigid counterparts. I want to capture my reader with something profound or interesting in my first sentence, but I am told I must mention the work that I will be writing about instead. I want to use first person because I think writing is personal, but instead I'm told I should say "one" rather than "we" and act as though I am not included in the human race of which I speak. I want to write about religion and pressing social issues, but instead I'm told to write a five paragraph essay about why a book I didn't particularly care for is so amazing. Compiling a portfolio is a difficult task for me, because if I had my choice, I would submit all creative works. However, I realize that you are right to ask me to do otherwise. An ability to write successfully in many different styles is the mark of true talent.

For my narrative piece, I chose the same essay that I sent in my college application. "Look Ken, it's *Church Barbie*" is sort of a tale of me growing up. At the end of my junior year, my English teacher made the class write a college essay as a sort of practice for our upcoming applications. Not sure where I was going to apply yet, I didn't know what to choose as my topic. I think I had five different essays started, but none of them seemed to be going anywhere. I remember a friend laughing at me as she read my first paragraph because she had no idea where I was going with it, and I don't think I did either. I have realized though that my best writing often comes when I simply fly where the wind takes me, letting my inspiration carry me along the way. The audience of this piece is really anyone interested in learning about who I am and how I became that way.

My explanatory essay was originally written as a standard in-class essay. The prompt was to pick a prominent theme in *Frankenstein* and support it. Initially the essay simply did that and nothing more, but as I read through it, I was inspired to change it around to make it more about the idea and less about the book.

I named my last essay "Apocalypse Now? God I hope so" because of how I felt while reading *Heart of Darkness* and beginning to write an essay on it. In my English class we read *Heart of Darkness*, read the screen play to *Apocalypse Now*, and then we watched the movie, which is based on the book. Personally, I hated all three works and was incredibly bored during the whole unit. I like this essay because I went against the norm. I turned it in with a little trepidation, worried if my teacher would be enraged by my blatant offense to a classic novel and a famous director, but I knew in my mind that I would be happier getting a C and being true to myself than if I had created something that I didn't believe in.

I think now I am supposed to tell you how much I have learned about myself as a person and as a writer from this portfolio process, right? Well, I think I already knew most of it; I am a huge procrastinator (as you may have gathered from the July 8th postmark date on my envelope), I am very opinionated, and I have no attention span. All of these characteristics are reflected in my writing through my strong assertions, my random thoughts, and my (typically)

concise points. It may not be the best style, but it's my style, it's *me*, and I like it. I'll leave you with a poem I wrote in my creative writing class, where I realized that it doesn't really matter what I write or how I write it, but it is the expression found through it that really matters.

If this is my song
Should I sing it to you?
What if my voice is not sweet?
If my words don't ring out
Like "silver bells" or "child's laughter"
Or echo across the skies
As if released from a mountain top
Or blend with the sounds of nature
As the voices of hummingbirds do in spring
Should I sing my song for you?

If this is my song
Will you listen intently?
And hang on my every word?
If the notes penetrate surface
And move your soul
Should I still sing my song for you?

If this is my song
Then I'll sing it loud
For my being is means to express
Open your ears
My tune has begun
I'm singing my song
But not for you
This song is for singing's sake

Sincerely, yours truly, warm regards, signing off,

Future Pop-collared North Face Wearer

NARRATIVE OR SHORT STORY

This piece can be based on personal experience as a non-fiction narrative or can be a short work of fiction. Its aim is to communicate the significance of an experience or event through description, dialogue, and/or narration. Put another way, successful pieces “show” rather than tell. The writing can be personal and informal. This narrative or short story should have a title.

From 273 portfolio submissions, ten were chosen to be judged as finalists for the honor of appearing in this collection. Successful writing in this category should be convincing to the reader, creating a sense of life-likeness, or “verisimilitude,” by its use of tangible illustrations and consistent tone, or “voice.” These effects may be a product of knowledgeable information about a subject, or can be simply invented, but in any case they evoke clear pictures in the reader’s mind through vivid language and imagery. The relevance of these associations to the author’s overall conceptual design creates a final, unified effect.

The three works included here were distinguished in various ways:

The first, *Rood and Riddle*, shows a deep and specific sensitivity to its subject. The author shares with us her personal particularities of observation, which stem from her strong feelings about horses. This piece introduces the reader to a professional and specialized world of knowledge through descriptions of veterinary activities and a clinic engaged in such care. She shows us how she feels around horses, and is equally responsive to the work performed by their human caretakers. She loves the smell of horses, and can strongly feel their reactions, through empathy and identification. She equally admires the workers who perform their necessary tasks with devotion. Thus, the author shows the emotional engagement that underlies her personal narrative of a life-long interest and tells the story of her career decision. At the core, it is her passion that creates the basis for us to understand and share in her possible commitment to a future career in taking medical care of horses.

The next piece, *If I Were a Switched Man*, illustrates a similar empathetic fiction through a gender-switching fantasy. A young woman author projects herself as a young man, who then finds himself in the body and social role of a young woman! All this is convincingly achieved, and avoids confusion despite its complications, mainly through well-observed details that the author projects from her own experience as a female. Filtered through her understanding of a young woman’s social roles, she evokes the mind and sensibility of an earnest young male speaker who is baffled by the difficult but “second-nature” performance of his friend as a girl. His new gender role, with which he is left to cope alone, is a source of embarrassed humor and fearful excruciations for the one long day of the “body switch” he endures. The genders are quite differentiated here: the subtext may be that men and women are really not all that alike. The story is conveyed with some real charm in the details. The punch line is a leap of understanding of the traumatized young man by this psychologically astute author—who convincingly shows us how the psyche of her character here will be affected by all this: he will swear off dating for quite a while. So, this piece is about a dual learning experience from “walking in someone else’s shoes:” the author must first imaginatively “walk” in a young man’s shoes to convincingly evoke his walking in hers.

The third, *College Essay*, is a kind of indirect persuasion paper, illustrating the personality of its author as a means of convincing his intended audience of college admissions office readers to accept him to their schools. It is a stylish exercise in voice and personality projection, loaded with witty connections and an imaginative light touch that lets the tone convey the speaker, who is, after all, trying to make a “case” for himself. Its elements of indirect

persuasiveness imply: “I’m interesting; so, admit me to your school!” It depends on its sense of humor to succeed—and for this reader it does, admirably. His many lists of various things keep ranging from the sublime to the ridiculous without a pause. This “good-timing” allows him to convey a wide range of details, joined rhetorically in list-structures, allowing for constant comic shifts of the reader’s expectations. He changes our perspective on his subjects quickly and often, undercutting serious statements with jokes, or joining together different kinds and levels of activities—in his lists of “roles,” for example, near the end. Humor is a very subjective genre, so the risk the author takes is part of its tension, an underlying context for its reception by an audience. This piece serves a serious purpose while it entertains—a wise rhetorical strategy if an author has the wit to pull it off, as this one convincingly does.

Rood and Riddle

I love the smell of a barn: the animals, the hay, the leather, and even the manure. I just feel comfortable in that atmosphere. I can stand on a cold cement floor while absorbing heat from the lazy thoroughbred I'm grooming. I can watch the dust particles float from his gritty coat as the currycomb runs circles through it. An occasional reflexive tail swoosh adds to the tranquility of the scene, and I sense the horse is relaxed, based on those heavy eyelids and drooping lip. This daily routine allows me to bond with the animal just as he would do in the wild with the herd.

There is a place that combines this pleasure with my fascination for veterinary medicine, the Rood & Riddle Equine Hospital in Lexington, Kentucky. I took my colicky mare there two years ago and was captivated by the hospital complex. Its aroma was the perfect blend of sterilized medical equipment and a horse stable.

During our two-day stay I observed as much as possible, and what I saw enriched my intellect beyond my imagination. Some of the workers were not practicing medicine, but they were there as constant monitors for the extremely ill horses, an essential duty. The man who watched over my horse was extremely knowledgeable in horsemanship and handling. There were also cleaning experts who had been hired to keep the barn immaculate, but wherever there are horses there is, of course, that wonderful smell. It was very useful to find out what kind of people are needed to run a well-oiled equine hospital should I ever decide to start one of my own.

Walking down the long aisle of the barn, I glanced into each of the stalls. The horses eyed me as I passed, but I did not detect a single ray of fear. Pain was present, for a gaping wound or infection may have been the cause of their stay, but the absence of fear convinced me that these animals knew they were being taken care of, that they were safe. That kind of trust from a wild thing can only be gained through the expertise and, more importantly, the patience of the people in this facility.

Some of the more exciting activities I witnessed were various procedures performed by the Doctors of Veterinary Medicine or DVMs there. One foal had been ill-positioned in the womb so that her leg was pressed against the amniotic sac and it developed a curvature in the cannon bone. This type of defect is normally irreversible, but her doctor was adamant that he could fix it. He applied a new cast to the leg every few days, and I was lucky enough to see this treatment and talk to him. I could perceive a spark of confidence in the way that he spoke of his medical method to heal the foal, possibly to the point where it could race. His passion for his job and love of animals was evident, and I definitely look forward to having that same vigor in my career.

I was also able to observe the medical students who were acquiring the hands-on experience imperative for veterinary practice. They were recording the heartbeat and respiration rates of the monitored horses. In addition to that, they were on call, night and day, for any emergencies, including colic surgery, broken legs, seizures, or anything else that might require immediate assistance. This direct contact with the medical world is what I'd love to encounter. It would be the ultimate experience for me to spend a year at an equine hospital like Rood & Riddle. I could learn to vaccinate, give IV fluids, bandage and cast limbs, dress severe wounds, and a host of other vital skills. But, above all, I would begin my extensive research of cutting-edge advances

in veterinary medicine, such as electric shock wave therapy and bone regeneration.

As we were getting ready to leave, I felt a sort of sadness come over me. Of course I was ecstatic that my mare was healed, but I didn't want to leave. I glanced over my shoulder as we left the driveway and my mind was set: I would be back—hopefully, next time, as medical student.

If I Were a Switched Man

It all started as a perfect date. . .

Her blonde wavy hair flowed onto her bare shoulders. Her blue eyes stood out. I could not stop looking at her as she opened the front door. She wore a pink tank top and dark blue jeans that accentuated her curvy hips and made her legs look long and thin. Then, all of a sudden, a shadow filled the doorway and her dad appeared out of the dark to meet his daughter's date.

"Remember, Jake, she has to be home by 11:30, or you will suffer the consequences," her dad warned.

Ten minutes later, we were in my car headed for the movies to see "The Ring," a horror flick. The movie plans worked just as I had hoped. Stacey held my arm tightly throughout the movie and buried her face in my shoulder whenever she got scared. After the movie, we went to my house to eat snacks and hang out. Not soon enough did we realize that it was past 11:30. We jumped in the car and sped to her house. As I turned the corner to her street, my car skidded and hit a man. Worried that I had killed someone, I ran to him, only to find him sitting Indian-style on the pavement in front of my car.

"Better watch where you're going, boy. Maybe looking through life through someone else's eyes will make you less ignorant," he preached at me, and then disappeared.

"Bzzzzz!" I swiped at the night stand to get rid of that horrid sound and opened my eyes to see a white ceiling. I looked at the clock to see what time it was and realized that I was not in my room. I panicked. "Did I fall asleep in Stacey's room? How did I end up here?" As I reached for the covers, I noticed my manicured fingers. "What did this girl do to me?!" My horror did not stop there. As soon as I ripped the covers off my body, I saw pink lacy pajamas. I also noticed that in these pajamas was not my bulky boy body; instead, there was a skinny figure with two lumps in the chest area.

"Stacey, pick up the phone!" a manly voice yelled, "Stacey? Pick it up!" Figuring that I should answer the phone, I quickly found the receiver and said "hello." I realized that my voice was just as soft and petite as my body. After the phone conversation with Stacey, who was stuck in my body, I had to get ready for school as a girl. I didn't think being a female would be much different from being a male. But, it took me five minutes to figure out how the bra worked before I succeeded at putting it on. I looked through her closet and found nothing but bright colored clothes. I put on a t-shirt and jeans and found them to be the tightest clothes I have ever worn. I tried to find sneakers for my feet, but all I saw were tall shoes. Walking to the bathroom in my strappy three-inch heels, I tripped and fell flat on my face. I was scared to death thinking that I'd have these enormous needles under my feet for the rest of the day. After brushing my teeth, I had to figure out how Stacey managed to straighten her hair every day from the bush that was on my head. I tried combing it, which only made it worse. Finally, I found a rubber band and attempted to put the hair into it. I reassured myself that all girls have bad hair days, and Stacey's friends will just assume today is her turn. Not knowing how to apply makeup, I ran downstairs and through the door as fast as I could, avoiding Stacey's parents.

I thought I was going to burst through my pants as I sat down into the car. Never before have I had such a hard time bending my leg. Driving as a girl was easier, until I arrived at a stoplight. A teenaged guy in a red Corvette next to me revved his engine, honked his horn and blew me kisses. I wanted to puke! How could someone do that to me!? I flicked him off, but I

realized that I was the weaker person here, and he probably just saw me as a hot piece of meat.

I met Stacey in the parking lot before school to exchange vital information, such as locker combinations and schedules that would help us survive through the day. As soon as I reached her locker, her friends bombarded me with questions about our date.

“Was he a jerk?”

“Did he act cute? Like, oh my God! He is so adorable!”

“Did he kiss you? I heard he was kinda prudish.”

I answered the questions largely in my favor, making me quite content with myself. All that changed when I saw them making confused looks at my hair. Then the girls fixed it. They took out my rubber band and put my hair up nicely. Finally, I looked human again. I couldn't believe that tying up hair requires so much talent. After pretending to be interested in all the gossip Stacey's friends talked about, I went to math when the bell rang.

“Hey Stacey, do you have a tampon?” the girl sitting next to me whispered.

“A what?” I had no idea how to help this poor soul. She needed something that I had never thought I would ever be involved in. “No, sorry,” I apologized. The event scared me. I never wanted to think of tampons again.

I had no break for the rest of the day. Girls came up to me all the time and gossiped about everyone in the school. They just never gave up. They talked so much that I heard more words coming from one girl's mouth that day than I have heard from my best guy buddy for as long as we were friends.

Driving home from school, I felt relieved at being far away from girls, but I was also worried that the next morning I would wake up and have to repeat the whole girl cycle again. I sat in a park until the sun went down and I thought it would be safe to go into Stacey's house and not have to carry on a long conversation with her parents. Waking up the next morning, I opened my eyes and saw baseball posters around me. I was me again, a brand new me that gave up dating for a long time.

NARRATIVE OR SHORT STORY—JAKE UVEGES

College Essay

There are six billion people in the world. What makes me so special? Frankly, I'm not. I've never negotiated a peace treaty. I didn't discover penicillin. I can't make toast without burning it. I've never won a Nobel Prize. In my life, I haven't once successfully refolded a road map. In fact, my most consequential award was a Harlem Globetrotters jersey I won in a 1997 raffle. In seventeen years, my most significant contribution to the human race has been my trend-setting use of the word "audacity" in everyday conversation.

Lacking such achievements, it's difficult to project myself as a three-dimensional person on one-dimensional paper. Here, however, is what I *can* tell you: Though I have the ability to, I have never purposefully hit a nun with my car. I don't like hunting. No matter how many times I vow never to eat at Taco Bell again, I always do. I don't have any piercing or tattoos, and don't plan on getting them either – unless, of course, that satanic cult I've been looking into decides to lower their yearly dues. I swear at my computer. It is not inanimate, so please don't tell me otherwise. When I was eight, I tripped on a basketball and hurt my knee. When I was sixteen, I slipped in the bathroom and cut my chin. Now I have two scars. In seventh grade little league, I hit two home runs in one game. I once listened to Bruce Springsteen's "Thunder Road" seventy-four times in one night. I am fluent in pig Latin. I'm not proud of it, but I have been known to wear black and brown in the same outfit. After I saw *The Godfather*, I quoted it for weeks, until my friends told me it was annoying. I've often wondered if life just doesn't get any better than a bag of Peanut M&M's and a box of Mike 'n' Ike's. Recently, I discovered that my left eye is dominant over my right; opposite of the norm. Because of this, I like to say that I belong to a minority group. I think bottled water is ridiculous. I drink bottled water. My favorite fruit is the grape, not because of its taste, but because of its aerodynamics.

I am *not* a racist, sexist, polygamist, or chemist. I *am* a conformist, activist, and motorist. I haven't yet found a cure for cancer, but then again neither has anybody else. I've only been allowed to see R-rated movies for a few months. My life is just beginning. Grant me a reprieve.

EXPLANATORY, EXPLORATORY, OR PERSUASIVE ESSAY

Generally speaking, essays in this category should be a focused, informative treatment of a specific topic. It should not only provide convincing examples and supporting data but should also examine multiple points of view and show strong evidence of critical thinking, awareness of audience, and attention to social context. If secondary sources are used, they must be documented. This explanatory, exploratory, or persuasive essay should have a title. You may find that you've written an essay which fits this category for a class other than English.

Students have approached this broad category in a variety of ways. In the past, writers have submitted examinations and arguments on topics of local and national debate; explorations of personal interests from the realms of history, science, sociology, music, and sports; as well as careful explanations of a subject, process, or text. With each of these approaches, a critical and thoughtful examination of the subject is essential.

In a powerful emotion appeal, Jessica Dumford's "Spare Change, Spare Lives" depicts the human cost of ignoring the worldwide health crisis. She begins with the gripping statements, "One million dead from malaria. One million children dead from measles; half a million dead from diarrhea. These are the headlines no one reads...these are the stories no one hears." She proceeds to develop her appeal juxtaposing the overwhelming sum of human lives with the cost of saving them. Jessica notes that anti-malaria tablets and measles vaccinations each cost twenty-six cents, and that the equivalent of \$30 from each U.S. citizen would be sufficient to eradicate these diseases worldwide. Ultimately, she argues that, "It is time to shift the United States' foreign policy to focus on world health." Jessica calls for a war against disease, a war where "no bombs will be dropped, no poisonous gases will be released, no guns will be fired...a war that would unite people and promote peace." Jessica also anticipates some of the protests against this war on disease, and attempts to refute them. Concluding that, "Evil takes shape in many forms, but disease is one form in which it can be destroyed," Jessica then effectively uses framing to present alternative headlines to devastating statements she used to open the essay.

In "The Making of a Human Voice and How to Use It" Adrienne Cantrell presents the anatomy of a violin as well as the history and process used in constructing it. Adrienne's explanatory essay masterfully shows the detail, complexity, and craft that goes into creating a violin, which she notes is the only instrument that comes close to replicating the human voice. Her purpose in writing the essay is to gain an increased appreciation for the violin, particularly among her intended audience—beginning violinists. A violinist herself, Adrienne believes that gaining an appreciation for "the art of making a violin" is imperative to playing it well. In fact, she devotes part of the essay to the proper ways of holding the instrument. Combined, her explanations convincingly outline how the artistry involved in constructing and playing the violin are both essential to creating its powerful voice.

In "The Bertha-Jane Connection," Megan Roberson examines the significance of the character Bertha in Charlotte Brontë's novel *Jane Eyre*. Megan argues that Brontë's novel makes a statement about the importance of women claiming some measure of independence. She identifies Bertha, Mr. Rochester's sequestered wife, as a symbol of female imprisonment, who serves as a catalyst for Jane Eyre's independence. In support of her argument, Megan artfully contrasts the two characters—drawing numerous connections throughout the novel. Highlighting the scene where Jane sees Bertha's reflection in the mirror, Megan claims that "Bertha is more than a mere reflection of Jane, she is the extreme version of Jane... While Jane only sets fire to a sign Helen Burns was forced to wear, Bertha sets fire to an entire house.

While Jane only contemplates suicide, Bertha actually throws herself off a roof.” Through the insightful and well-supported connections she draws between the two characters, Megan builds a persuasive case that the character Bertha acts as a prompt for Jane to become self-reliant and confident before Jane marries.

Spare Change, Spare Lives

One million dead from malaria (Now). One million children dead from measles; half a million dead from diarrhea (Measles; Now). These are the headlines no one reads. The mother burying one child as the other lies dying in her arms. The orphaned boy holding the hand of his dead sister. These are the stories no one hears. Two and a half million tormented faces no one sees. Two and a half million lives no one saves.

Disease is the number one killer of innocent people—people, who are condemned to death solely because they are born in third world countries. In these countries, diseases long eradicated or cured in industrialized nations, still kill. The anti-malaria tablet is twenty-six cents (Now). The measles vaccination is twenty-six cents (Measles). A small cost for an invaluable life. And yet two and a half million people die each year. And next year two and a half million people or more will die if nothing is changed. The cost of ignoring this problem is the suffering and death of millions—a cost which first world nations, such as the United States, can no longer afford to ignore. It is time to shift the United States' foreign policy to focus on world health.

Since its birth the United States has celebrated and encouraged the “unalienable rights” of individuals. Among these rights, as stated in the Declaration of Independence, are “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” It is upon these seven sacred words that the United States has lived. It is upon these seven sacred words that wars have been fought and heroic lives have been sacrificed. And it is for these same words that a war against disease should be fought. These “unalienable rights” should be for all men, women, and children. The boundaries of this country should not be the boundaries of liberty.

In order to protect the sanctity of the rights of individuals, a war needs to be fought against disease. The war would be an unproblematic victory. The United States already has access to cures and vaccinations. The funding cost can be kept at a low rate because the cures and vaccinations for the top killing diseases such as malaria and measles cost less than a dollar, and preventive measures that would reduce the AIDS epidemic such as a year's distribution of condoms cost less than fourteen dollars (Measles; Now). A study completed by the World Health Administration, calculated that if the amount of money that was spent in world health affairs was increased from the present six dollars per United States citizen to a mere thirty dollars per citizen then there would be sufficient funds to provide basic health care to third world countries and eradicate diseases such as malaria and measles (qtd. in Now). Twenty-four dollars more per citizen can easily be attained by redirecting current foreign policy funds and is more than worth the amount of priceless lives that would be saved.

This war will be like no other—no bombs will be dropped, no poisonous gases will be released, no gun will be fired. It is a war that can be fought without killing, a war that would lead away from destruction, a war that would unite people and promote peace.

And yet this war will still be protested.

People may argue that by improving world health, the population will increase and more problems will be created rather than destroyed. The demographic transition model proposed in the 1940s by Reverend Thomas Malthus contradicts this argument. According to the transition model, a population's mortality and fertility will decline in result of development which will lead to the decline of population (“Models”). It is human instinct to transmit genes. It logically follows that in order to insure genetic survival a person will have more children if the children

are less likely to survive. When the survival rate increases, the need to have numerous children in hope that one will survive is eliminated. Thus, birth rates decrease and the population remains stable as world health improves.

Still others may protest that disease is too vast to be completely eliminated. This is a misconception. In 1967, the World Health Organization started a campaign to eliminate smallpox. By 1980, just thirteen years later, smallpox was a certified eradicated disease and an estimated 40 million lives have to this date been saved (“Smallpox”). In 1988, the World Health Organization also initiated a campaign to eliminate polio. In the years between 1988 and 1996, the reported cases of polio declined nearly 90% from 35,000 to 3,995 (“Disease”). Also, in the United States malaria and measles have been reduced by a system of vaccinations and medications. This successful system of disease elimination can be emulated by future campaigns. With the precedents already set, disease although vast, can be eliminated.

People may also fear and argue that the focus of world health would lead to the prevalence of dictators, communists, and terrorists. It should be noted that even with American aid these groups still exist: the dictatorships of Burma, Saudi Arabia and forty-three other nations, the communist countries of Vietnam, Laos, North Korea, Cuba, China, and numerous terrorist regimes such as the Taliban (Fulford). “Military obligations” totaling \$439 billion were spent in the years from 1946 to 1996 by the United States to fight an enemy that is yet to be defeated (Rodriguez 171). Evil takes shape in many forms, but disease is one form in which it can be destroyed. Also, by promoting world health the United States would create a positive image of the country. This image would help alleviate the misunderstanding, which leads to hate, which leads to violence. The promotion of world health, rather than encouraging the violence of dictators, communists and terrorists, will encourage understanding and peace and compassion will overcome the passion of hate.

One million saved from malaria. One million children saved from measles, half a million saved from diarrhea. Those are the headlines everyone should read. The mother singing her children to sleep. The boy laughing with his sister. Those are the stories everyone should hear. Two and a half million joyous faces everyone should see. Two and half million lives saved!

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The Making of a Human Voice and How to Use It

The violin is arguably the most cherished and well-known orchestral instrument in the world. Many are moved by its unique quality of sound; it is known as the only instrument close to the sound of a human voice. Maybe the violin is so revered because “humans in all times and places are powerfully moved, or threatened, by the possibility that with our hands and minds we can create something that is perfect” (Ebert). But the sound of this instrument was not magically created overnight; the creation of the very first violin took many years and has been a product of much experimentation. This is the reason that every beginning violinist should learn to appreciate the art of making a violin and the process of holding and bowing their instrument so that they will have the knowledge to play it well.

The process of constructing a violin is an age-old tradition that has been developed and refined for centuries. Each step is crucial to the quality of the instrument’s sound. The violin’s body consists of a rib structure, which is made from six thin maple ribs that are bent to shape by applying dry heat. The ribs are reinforced at the joints by wood blocks which are located in each of the four outward curving corners, one at the top rib, and one at the lower rib. To reinforce the glue-joints between the ribs and the table and back of the violin, strips of willow or pine are glued along the inside edges of the ribs to create the lining. The back plate of the violin is made from either one or two matched pieces of maple. The wood chosen for these pieces is very important and affects the sound production of the violin. The outline of the plate is drawn onto the maple and sawn out, and the arching (the outward bulge) is then painstakingly carved to a thickness of about five millimeters. The front plate of the violin, or table, has two soundholes carved from it on either side of the bridge. These soundholes are called f-holes due to their shape and are made to project the sound. Purfling is done by inlaying thin strips of wood around the top and back of the violin a short distance from the rim. Purfling strengthens the delicate edgework and produces a beautiful frame around the instrument’s outline (Gusset).

The bridge is cut from a thin sliver of maple. Intricate shapes are carved from it, known as the “heart,” “ears,” and the two “feet” that allow it to stand on the violin table. The bridge is placed directly between the small nicks cut in the middle of each f-hole. The top of the bridge is curved to conform to the arch of the violin table, which allows the player to play each string individually (Skinner). The bridge is held onto the instrument by as much as seventeen pounds of pressure exerted from the four strings, which makes it a very delicate piece that must be checked periodically for leaning or warping. A bass-bar is fitted to the underside of the table underneath the left foot of the bridge. Underneath the right foot of the bridge, a soundpost is wedged between the front and back panel. The soundpost is made of spruce or pine and resists the downward pressure of the strings and improves the sound.

A neck is fitted to the top rib and is made to hold the fingerboard above the table. The fingerboard is a piece of ebony that extends beyond the neck and gradually widens towards the bridge. At the top of the neck is a pegbox that has holes drilled into each side in which the pegs are held. The pegs are used for a wide range of tuning. The pegbox slopes slightly backwards, which tensions the strings across the ebony nut at the top of the fingerboard and keeps them raised above the fingerboard. At the top of the pegbox is a scroll, added during the baroque period as an artistic flourish to provide an aesthetic touch to its already pleasing appearance (Vienna Online Magazine). The strings are wrapped around the pegs, stretched across the

bridge, and held by an ebony or boxwood tailpiece. Anywhere from one to four fine tuners can be attached to the tailpiece; these are used to tighten or loosen the string to change its pitch for fine-tuning. The tailpiece is held into place by a loop of gut or nylon that is wrapped around an ebony end button located in the middle of the bottom rib.

After gluing is done, the violin must be exposed to air and sun for several days to a few weeks to darken the wood through the process of oxidation (Gusset). A protective varnish is brushed onto the surface of the violin, which has a slight dampening effect to the sound, but it is primarily used to protect the wood from perspiration, dust, dirt, and humidity (Kolneder 21). “The classical Italian makers appear to have used different formulations for the ground coat, which seals and protects the wood and does much to bring out its natural beauty, and the top coats, which were tinted with rich red, yellow and golden-brown colours . . . Recent research suggests that walnut or linseed oil may have been an important constituent of the finest old Italian varnish, later supplanted by recipes based on shellac and alcohol” (Stowell 5).

Both the construction of the violin and the way it is played are equally important to its sound production. This is very critical to learn early so that a bad habit does not need correcting later on. The modern violin is held between the chin and the left shoulder, with the scroll angling towards the left. Violin teachers will have varying ideas of the correct position to hold a violin, but many great violinists have held their instruments in different ways and have been successful. Some will hold a violin directly under the chin, and others believe that the highest position on the shoulder is best. A chinrest is usually attached to the left side of the tailpiece to make it more comfortable for the violinist to hold. Sometimes a shoulder rest can be attached to the back of the violin which can be taken off after playing. The shoulder rest can be made of various materials and provides height and padding to the violinist’s shoulder.

The left hand gently moves along the neck and fingerboard of the violin. The left fingers press down upon the string, shortening its length, which creates a higher pitch. The right hand holds the bow, which consists of a long stick of wood and a gathering of horsehair stretched from one end of the bow to the other. “In the bowing area, two C-shaped indentations (the waist) accommodate the bow’s motion across the strings” (Kolneder 13). The four strings can either be bowed with the horsehair, plucked, or bounced with the stick of the bow to produce vastly different colors of sound. “Bowing across the string is the normal manner of tone production, but the process is actually extremely complicated and in its most minute details not yet entirely understood . . . The strings’ basic pitch depends on its length, thickness, material . . . and tension. These factors determine the frequency, that is, the number of vibrations . . . per second” (Kolneder 16). The bow must be rosined frequently to allow the strings to vibrate to create the fullest sound.

Even if a luthier, or stringed instrument maker, takes years to complete a violin, it can only produce its best sound if every step of its construction and every piece is made with is of the best quality. The same is true of the time needed for a musician to play the violin well. A player must learn that what counts is not how much time is spent practicing, but the quality of practice. A private teacher is also required, so proper instruction will be given. A musician must also fully understand and appreciate the skill required for constructing a violin. Not until then will a violinist be able to use their knowledge to bring forth their instrument’s fullest and most beautiful sound.

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The Bertha-Jane Connection

Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* traces the journey of the young heroine Jane Eyre from an ostracized orphan to an independent young woman. Jane constantly battles with her passion and her role as a woman. She is forced to repress all emotion until her master at Thornfield Hall, Mr. Rochester, encourages her to speak freely. Though she loves him desperately, Jane refuses to marry him upon learning that he has a wife, Bertha Mason Rochester. Though some may consider Bertha merely a clever plot device to tantalize readers by furthering Jane and Mr. Rochester's separation, she has a much more significant role. Bertha acts as a symbol of female imprisonment and a catalyst for Jane's growth into an independent woman.

Once the secret about Bertha is revealed, the reader can derive new meaning from passages prior to Jane's knowledge of Bertha. Though she does not know why, Jane is drawn to the third floor, saying, "restlessness was in my nature; it agitated me to pain sometimes. Then my sole relief was to walk along the corridor of the third story, [...] and allow my mind's eye to dwell on whatever bright visions rose before it" (111). While the reader may have initially overlooked this reflection, after learning about Bertha it holds new significance. Bertha is imprisoned on the third floor for her "madness," and on that same floor Jane feels open to reflect on her hopes for gender equality, hopes that in her time would be considered mad. It is ironic that the place where Jane feels the most free is the same place that confines another. Perhaps Brontë is suggesting that feminist thoughts of gender equality, such as Jane's, will be misconstrued for madness and eventually lead to imprisonment. It is important for the reader to realize this link that Brontë creates between Bertha and Jane. Confinement, after all, is not an alien concept to Jane. At Gateshead, she was locked in the red room because others there "looked darkly and doubtfully on [her] face, as [if] incredulous of [her] sanity" (11). Jane's memory of her imprisonment plays an important role when she discovers Bertha locked away on account of her supposed lunacy. Their connection is furthered when, after Jane delivers her feminist manifesto, she hears the laugh of Bertha. Though this laugh means little to Jane, the reader may interpret it in many ways. Since the laugh is timed right after Jane explains the need for women to be treated as men are, Brontë may be suggesting that Bertha's insanity is a product of the restrictive customs of the day. In addition to this, the laugh can be read as society's response to such an idea as gender equality. Thus, it is through this clever placement of Bertha in the plot that she serves as a symbol of female imprisonment.

Had it not been for Bertha's presence and her uncanny resemblance to Jane and her fears, Jane would have never achieved the independence which she so desperately sought. After learning of the existence of Bertha, Jane, in retrospect, calls herself an "ardent expectant woman - almost a bride - [who] was [now] a cold, solitary girl again: her life was pale her prospects desolate" (300). Jane understands that before her knowledge of Bertha, she had made too much of her happiness dependent on someone else. If Mr. Rochester's marriage to Bertha had never existed or been revealed, Jane would have married him and might have become completely dependent upon him. At Gateshead, Bessie and Miss Abbot constantly reminded Jane that she was inferior to everyone and "under obligation to Mrs. Reed" (12). It was because of her supposed inferiority that Jane was forced into the red room. Similarly, Bertha must submit to Mr. Rochester because she is not considered his equal and as a result she is powerless to his decision to confine her. Jane would have also been "under obligation" to Mr. Rochester, and thus his inferior, had she married him without any wealth. It is only after learning to depend on herself, acquiring wealth, and realizing Mr. Rochester's dependence on

her that Jane can reconsider marrying him. While Bronte may not have intended for the reader to question the circumstances for Bertha's confinement, one cannot help but wonder if perhaps Bertha's behavior was simply misunderstood. If that was the case, Jane, who is often misunderstood, might have also been imprisoned.

The scene where Jane first encounters Bertha is important since it is the manifestation of Jane's fears. On the eve of her wedding, Jane wakes to find a strange woman in her room wearing her wedding veil. So frightened by the horrific appearance of the woman, Jane watches the woman in silence "remove [Jane's] veil from its gaunt head, rent it in two parts, and flinging both on the floor, [trample] on them." Then "it [draws] aside the window-curtain and [looks] out" (288). Once the reader is aware that the woman who has torn the wedding veil in two is Bertha, this passage becomes more significant. Jane may never consciously connect this event to her decision to leave Mr. Rochester; nevertheless, on some level her awareness of the similarities between herself and Bertha influenced her choice. It is understandable that Bertha is unhappy with the convention of marriage, since it led to her captivity. However, at some point in her life she was open and willing to wed, as was Jane. After displaying her contempt for marriage, Bertha walks to the window and looks out. It was marriage that forced her into a domestic setting, and now she is unable to escape. Bertha, like Jane, longs to be free. However, her marriage will only allow her to look at the world from within a house and gaze at something she will never have while married: her freedom. Jane fears that her own marriage to Mr. Rochester will lead her to the same fate as Bertha.

Before the truth about the mysterious third floor was revealed, Jane was becoming consumed by Mr. Rochester, declaring, "my future husband was becoming my whole world; and more than the world; almost my hope of heaven. He stood between me and every thought of religion, as an eclipse intervenes between man and the broad sun. I could not, in those days, see God, for his creature of whom I had made an idol" (279). It is precisely this statement which justifies Bertha's existence. By giving Jane a snap shot of what her life could become, Bertha draws her out of the trance that has caused her to forget herself as well as God. Even a man as noble as Mr. Rochester has flaws, as proven by his concealment of Bertha. Bronte wants women to realize that they should never put all their hopes in a man, because it can only lead to disappointment and loss of self.

Bertha saves Jane from abandoning herself. When Mr. Rochester sees Jane for the first time after their encounter with Bertha, he begs for her forgiveness, and she gives it to him. Jane addresses the audience and says, "Reader, I forgave him at that very moment, and on the spot. There was such remorse in his eyes, such true pity in his tone, such manly energy in his manner; and besides there was such unchanged love his whole look and mine – I forgave him all" (303). Though she forgives him, she knows that she will need to find her own strength and forgive herself before she can think about marriage. She has allowed her unbridled passion for him to take over, and has thus forgotten God and herself. After internally struggling with whether to remain with or leave Mr. Rochester, Jane concludes, "the more solitary, the more friendless, the more unsustained I am, the more I will respect myself. I will keep the law given by God sanctioned by man. I will hold to the principles received by me when I was sane, and not mad - as I am now" (322). Jane calls herself mad, in that she has abandoned herself and God for Mr. Rochester. Perhaps Jane sees herself potentially becoming more like Bertha, who only acts upon her unrestricted passion. Her fear of abandoning reason and always yielding to her passion, as Bertha does, drives Jane to leave Thornfield. Had Jane not seen her likeness to Bertha and her potential to become like her, she might not have left Thornfield, which was essential for her to gain independence.

Jane first sees Bertha as a reflection in the mirror, powerfully advancing their connection. However, Bertha is more than a mere reflection of Jane. She is the extreme version of Jane, which is highlighted in the references to fire. Fire is first seen in the color of the red room, where Jane is confined for being different. Bertha, also sentenced to confinement, first sets Mr. Rochester's bed, and then the entire house, on fire. Once again, Bertha is shown as an extreme of Jane. While Jane only sets fire to a sign Helen Burns was forced to wear, Bertha sets fire to an entire house. While Jane only contemplates suicide, Bertha actually throws herself off a roof. In this sense, Bertha is the embodiment of Jane's passion.

In order to truly understand Bertha's role in this story, one must understand Bronte's goal for Jane. Jane is meant to be a model for women to follow: she is married, but she is still independent. Had Jane married Mr. Rochester before finding a network of support and comfort outside of Thornfield, Jane would have continued becoming more and more dependent on Mr. Rochester for her happiness. Instead, she has learned to rely on herself and God, thus ensuring her independence. After returning to Mr. Rochester and then marrying him, Jane claims that, "to be together is for us to be at once as free as in solitude, as gay as in company" (459). Their marriage is Bronte's idea of an ideal marriage. They have not sacrificed their independence, yet both are happy in their union. Jane is not fully aware of her connection to Bertha, but the reader benefits from understanding Bertha to be an exaggerated version of Jane, a catalyst in her development, and a symbol of female imprisonment. Bronte demonstrates the damage that comes from confinement and establishes Bertha not only as the inner emotions and desires of Jane but of all women who are forced into a mold which restricts their nature.

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RESPONSE TO A TEXT

This essay should respond to a written text (short story, novel, poem, play, or essay) or a cultural text (film, music, or visual art) produced by professionals, classmates, or yourself. The response should interpret or evaluate all or part of a text. Possible approaches include analyzing textual elements, explaining the text's significance, comparing the text to other texts, relating the text to personal experience and/or connecting it to larger social or cultural contexts. Use support from the text to develop ideas and strengthen focus without overshadowing your own response or giving extensive summaries. If secondary sources are used, they must be documented correctly. (If the print text is not common, a copy of it should be included with your portfolio.) This response to a text should have a title.

Megan Roberson carefully analyzes and details the painting “The Marquise de Peze’ and the Marquise de Rouget with her two children” in her essay “Elizabeth Vigee-Lebrun’s Portrait of Friendship and Motherhood.” Responding to the painting as a cultural text, Roberson explores how Vigee-Lebrun uses color, character placement and body language, and visual perspective to lead audiences to a specific interpretation of the work. The careful organization of this essay leads to the argument that each element in the painting reinforces the theme of friendship and motherhood. Roberson blends examples from the text with her own critical analysis and reflection in a way that lends ethos and energy to her essay.

Lisa Castellano’s essay “Good Versus Evil in *The Scarlet Letter*” works through some issues of moral ambiguity in Hawthorne’s classic text. In a well-developed piece, Castellano compares the characters Chillingworth and Dimmesdale to argue that Hawthorne never intended to be clear in his categorization of the characters. Instead, “Hawthorne developed these two contrasting characters to show the hazy middle between good and evil.” Using carefully selected and well-incorporated textual evidence and critical reflection, Castellano explores the purpose of ambiguity in novels while coming to a personal conclusion about Hawthorne’s intentions for the novel. Castellano’s clear writing style and organization help readers follow a complex argument.

In her essay “The Oppressive State of Freedom,” Sarah Casner demonstrates a straightforward approach to textual response. She analyzes the differing ways Janie is oppressed in *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by following Janie’s struggle to discover “a love like that between a bee and a pear tree blossom.” Investigating sections of the text by incorporating personal reflection, textual evidence and analysis, she uses close attention to detail to support her thesis. In each section of her essay, Casner explores significant quotes and issues from the text and relates them to the larger thematic and cultural concerns of the novel. From connecting a central metaphor with underlying themes to examining gender roles, Casner connects responses to the text by organizing her essay fluently and clearly.

Elizabeth Vigee-Lebrun's Portrait of Friendship and Motherhood

The Marquise de Peze' and the Marquise de Rouget with her two children, painted by the French artist Elizabeth Vigee-Lebrun, is currently on display at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. There are four sitters: two women in their finest attire and two children leaning on their mother. Airy veils elegantly draped around both the Marquise de Peze' and the Marquise de Rouget make them easily identifiable as aristocracy, as light bounces off their brightly colored dresses. They have an air of serenity and, more importantly, camaraderie and maternal love, which radiate from the painting.

Because soft blues and greens dominate the backdrop, one feels a sense of peace. Behind the Marquise de Peze', the sky appears to be in turmoil because of the giant dark blue storm clouds and lack of light. However, behind the mother, the Marquise de Rouget, everything is more orderly and calm. There are pink roses, a neat row of trees, and a wall behind her. The wall, which provides a sense of stability because of its rigid horizontality, is possibly a reference to her stability as a mother. Though there is more order, the sky behind the Marquise de Rouget is still dark. The darkness of the background perfectly contrasts with the peoples' glowing skin and bright dresses. Because of this contrast between dim and bright, one's eye is immediately drawn to the women and children. The light, which encompasses only the sitters, serves as a source of unity amongst the women and children. To avoid distraction by the tumultuous background, Vigee-Lebrun carefully painted similar hues in the sky and in the women's dresses. There are soft blue and rose-colored clouds that loom above the Marquise de Rouget's head, bringing one's attention back to what is important. Thus, with the sharp contrasts between lights and colors, the messages being conveyed by the sitters' body language and appearance are more evident.

In addition to colors and body language, the nature of the composition also helps to enhance the feelings of serenity and unity. This painting is essentially composed of horizontal and vertical lines. There are very few diagonal lines, and those that are there have very slight angles. One of the most obvious diagonal lines is the Marquise de Peze's arm, which is by no means a steep angle. This lack of diagonal lines helps keep the viewer focused on the women and children and reinforces the sense of calm.

The two children are hanging only on the woman seated on the right, implying that they are hers. The other woman, the Marquise de Peze', has her hand placed gently on the mother suggesting a close relationship. The women's resemblance likely causes most to believe they are sisters. Vigee-Lebrun idealizes the two women so much that, if it were not for subtle differences in hair, dress, and eye color, they would look identical. In fact, they are so close in appearance that their clothes are more distinguishing than their faces. Despite the formalities of their dress, they all have relaxed and happy expressions. With the exception of their adolescent features, the children bear a striking resemblance to the women. All of the sitters have rosy cheeks and some white in their attire, which also serves to unite them. Also, the pink of Marquise de Rouget's dress is picked up in the highlights in the other woman's dress. All of these factors of uniformity serve to create a strong sense of friendship and closeness.

A strong sense of motherhood can be inferred from several different aspects of the painting. The mother is shorter and less prominent than her friend, the Marquise de Peze', who is in the forefront of the painting. The main shadow on the Marquise de Rouget is cast by her

children, implying that they dominate her life. The only other shadow on the mother is cast by M. de' Peze's arm, which is pointing to the other child, thus furthering this idea of the children's dominance. Though the mother and the children are not making eye contact, there seems to be a mutual display of affection. Both children are resting on their mother, and the older one is in such a position that, if the mother were to move, he would fall. They are clearly dependent on her as she sits in a stable position to support them. The Marquise de Peze' has her hand on her friend's shoulder, casually supporting her and the children, while the Marquise de Rouget rests her hands on both her child and on her friend. Though they are posing, they are in no way rigid. These positions help to make the message of friendship and motherhood more prevalent.

Vigee-Lebrun draws attention to the sitters not only by the background, but also by the gazes of the sitters. The tallest sitter, the Marquise de Peze', is also making eye contact with the onlooker, causing her to be the primary focal point. Nevertheless, Vigee-Lebrun does not want the onlooker to only stare at her. She is able to move the viewer's eye to both of the women and the children by utilizing their positions and gazes. From looking at the Marquise de Peze', the onlooker's eye is directed to the smaller child by the Marquise de Peze's outstretched arm. Though this child is looking out at the audience, she is resting on her mother. Thus, her positioning helps guide the gaze toward the other child. The smaller child is wearing a bright white dress, which sharply contrasts with the older child's dark clothing, and the fact that her arm is angled up brings the eye to the level where the older child is sitting. Attention is drawn to the Marquise de Rouget by the older child embracing her. As she casually looks off into the distance, one's eye is drawn again to the Marquise de Peze', who lies alongside the gaze of her friend. Consequently, it is hard for the viewers to take their eyes off the sitters, who create an endless circle by their positioning and the lines of their gazes.

Friendship and motherhood, the primary themes of the painting, are conveyed through the sitters' body language and the carefully placed details that unite them. The serenity that permeates through the painting helps onlookers feel relaxed so they might better realize the friendship between the women and appreciate the love they share.



Good Versus Evil In The Scarlet Letter

“To the untrue man, the whole universe is false—it is impalpable—it shrinks to nothing within his grasp. And he himself, insofar as he shows himself in a false light, becomes a shadow, or, indeed, ceases to exist” (Hawthorne 123). Both Dimmesdale and Chillingworth had lives full of anger and falsehoods that drove them crazy. They hurt the ones they loved and kept themselves from true happiness. Hawthorne used the weak, yet complex, character of Reverend Dimmesdale and the perverse, evil character of Roger Chillingworth as strong literary tools that exemplify the theme of good versus evil and the gray area that resides in the middle. He also leaves the readers with a perplexing and open-ended question with an answer that’s left to interpretation. In which category should we place a minister who has committed a mortal sin, and where should we place a devilish man who left all his money to the product of the adultery that drove him insane?

It was Hawthorne’s objective to leave the readers unsure of the answer to this question. He established a devoted minister, pure in the eyes of every parishioner, who could not live up to the pedestal that the congregation put him on:

Part of Dimmesdale’s agony during these years comes directly from his increasing abilities as a minister. He becomes a wonderful preacher and an effective counselor. It seems that sin has made him better suited for his work, a strange and distressing discovery for one who has carefully kept himself apart from the world precisely to preserve his purity. (Baym “Who? The Characters”)

How can a gifted preacher, who is great at his job, be evil? How can a minister who is a loyal subject of God defy His laws? Aren’t those chosen to do His work perfect in every way? Shouldn’t they be? It was thinking like this that drove Dimmesdale insane. He justified his failure to confess the sinful truth by claiming that he was doing it for the good of the congregation. What congregation wants to be led by a minister who can’t confess those sins that he bares upon himself?

Dimmesdale knew what he did was wrong and that it deserved punishment, and for this, we can admire him. However, he cowardly refused to open his mouth, and he left Hester to carry the burden meant for two. This lack of dignity leaves many loathing the minister we are meant to idolize. “But to confess his act and receive the punishment that would satisfy his sense of guilt would be to lose his position in society, which he cannot live without. Thus, the very social dependency that makes him condemn himself also keeps him from confessing” (Baym, “Who? The Characters”). He is so afraid of what others may think of him that he doesn’t seem to care about what kind of person this secret is turning him into. Dimmesdale is his own worst judge, and he feels more guilt than anyone should ever experience. The readers are left confused. Should they pity a man who really wants to confess, but can’t, or should they despise a coward who is too afraid of losing his position in society to do the right thing? Is he good or evil?

One man, who some may have an easier time classifying, is Roger Chillingworth. He is immediately depicted as a villain with “A writhing horror that twisted itself across his features, like a snake gliding over them, and making one little pause, with all its wreathed intervolutions in open sight” (Hawthorne 57). This illustration of a strange man in the crowd at the first scaffold scene foreshadows the evil that Chillingworth will exude throughout the rest of the novel. A few pages later, we discover the reason for Chillingworth’s move to the village, and we

learn that his objectives are not exactly pure. "It irks me, nevertheless, that the partner of her iniquity should not, at least, stand on the scaffold by her side. But he will be known!-he will be known!-he will be known" (Hawthorne 59). Chillingworth became obsessed with destroying the man who took his wife away from him.

Chillingworth started out as a rational man, just looking for some answers, but he soon became obsessed with one mission. It is said that men like him "are overtaken by their goals; they lose touch with humanity; they become monsters; and they often end up as destroyers of those they love" (Baym, "Who? The Characters"). Chillingworth did just that. He became so evil that he tormented Dimmesdale every day to no avail. Chillingworth even tried to deny the man redemption by stopping his final confession:

At this instant, old Roger Chillingworth thrust himself through the crowd,--or, perhaps, so dark, disturbed, and evil, was his look, he rose from the nether region,--to snatch back his victim from what he sought to do! Be that as it might, the old man rushed forward, and caught the minister by the arm. "Madman, hold! what is your purpose?" whispered he. "Wave back that woman! Cast off this child! All shall be well! Do not blacken your fame, and perish in dishonor! I can yet save you! (Hawthorne 230)

Chillingworth first set forth to destroy the minister with a public confession, but his sick mind soon decided that a life of eternal shame would torment the minister forever. He tried his hardest to stop Dimmesdale from confessing, but despite his best efforts, the minister finally did the right thing.

Even though Chillingworth did his very best to destroy and humiliate his nemesis, he still did some things that prevent him from being totally evil. Yes, he did hold a huge grudge against the adulterous minister, but he forgave his former wife and even recognized that he was partially to blame for the end result. "We have wronged each other. Mine was the first wrong, when I betrayed thy budding youth into a false and unnatural relation with my decay. Therefore as a man who has not thought and philosophized in vain, I seek no vengeance, plot no evil against thee" (Hawthorne 69-70). Chillingworth has every right to be angry with Hester; she did commit an adulterous affair. Miraculously, the rigid, cold Chillingworth did possess a shred of humanity, and he forgave his former wife. Another noble thing that this previously deemed snake did against his character was leaving all of his money to Pearl, the daughter of the affair that drove him crazy. Would an evil person possess even a shred of generosity?

"Is the individual, in essence, 'really' good or 'really' bad? Is there such a thing as real evil? Are people, perhaps, essential mixtures of good and bad? Where do our ideas of good and bad originate? Is the nature of evil, if evil has a nature, such that a single bad deed colors the entire psyche?" (Baym, "Themes in *The Scarlet Letter*") These questions were posed by Nina Baym as she tried to decode the themes of this novel. Is Dimmesdale good because he had every intention of confessing or is he just as evil as Chillingworth because he wouldn't allow himself to do so? Is Chillingworth a snake just because he sought after the same justice that all of us want in our lives? Chillingworth did go to an extreme, but does that make him evil?

Hawthorne developed these two contrasting characters to show the hazy middle between good and evil. These two characters seemed easy to classify in the beginning, but as the story progressed, Hawthorne threw in twists that confused each reader on whether either character was truly good or evil. Hawthorne's literary genius did this to add interest into his story, and he leaves it up to the reader to decide what is good and what is evil. That is why this book will stand the test of time, because just as the perception of Dimmesdale and Chillingworth will change, so will that of good and evil.

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The Oppressive State of Freedom

According to the American Heritage Dictionary, fourth edition, to oppress is to keep down by severe and unjust use of force or authority, not exactly something that sounds positive. *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, by Zora Neale Hurston, is frequently read as a variation on a rites of passage novel in which a young woman breaks from the constraints of traditional roles accorded women of her time and finds a kind of freedom that mirrors her true self. The young woman of the story, Janie, is oppressed within most of the relationships in her life. Nanny and Logan oppress her for material security, and she is placed into social and gender roles by Jody. Only through her relationship with her third husband Tea Cake is Janie finally free to be herself.

Nanny and Logan want the same for Janie—safety—and see a loveless marriage to a stable man as being more important than happiness, oppressing her for the sake of material security. Janie has an image, a dream of what love and marriage should be like. Her pear tree becomes her hope for the future, and after watching “a dust bearing bee sink into the sanctum of a bloom” (10) she exclaims “so this [is] a marriage!” (10). After Nanny discovers that Janie is acting on her dream of love, marriage and the pear tree (kissing a boy), she decides that Janie must marry Logan Killicks. Nanny admits to Janie that she is “a cracked plate,” broken by the hardness of her life, and doesn’t want Janie to face any of the same difficulties she did, mainly, being raped and having a child out of wedlock (20). Janie is forced by her grandmother’s oppressive nature and her desire for Janie to be safe into an equally oppressive marriage. “The vision of Logan Killicks [is] desecrating the pear tree,” and Janie begins to give up hope that she will ever have a love like that of the bee and the blossoms (40). Janie is a mere sixteen when she marries Logan, and because of her marriage her “first dream [is] dead, so she [becomes] a woman” (25). Not only does Janie become a woman, but she also becomes an object, just something Logan owns. He tells Janie that she “ain’t got no particular place” (31) and should just do what he tells her to. So, not only has Nanny arranged this marriage for material reasons, but Janie becomes material to Logan. In her freeing moment from him, as she runs off, Janie “[unties her apron] and [flings] it on a low bush beside the road” (32). This symbolizes her attaining freedom from the oppressive relationship that had become her life. Janie believes that she is freeing herself not only from the oppression that Nanny and Logan have created for her, but from all oppressive relationships. Her dream of the pear tree can return, no longer squelched by Nanny and Logan’s desire to give her material stability.

Joe Starks, Janie’s second husband, oppresses Janie even more, but in a different way; he places social and gender restraints on her. Janie loses her identity as her own person when she marries Jody, and becomes “Mrs. Mayor Starks” (43). Not once throughout her entire marriage to Jody does anyone but Jody refer to Janie by her true name, and even Jody reminds her constantly that she is the wife of the mayor. He tells Janie that she “is made to sit on de front porch and rock and fan [herself]” (29). She is a lady and shouldn’t have to worry about doing manual labor or worrying about life. This is ironically what Nanny had in mind for Janie, and she has run head first into it since she marries Jody out of her own free will. Moreover, Jody becomes very possessive of Janie and makes her cover her hair. He is jealous of the other men of the town looking at it, and therefore “her hair was NOT going to show” (55). Although Janie is irked by having to wear a head-rag, she continues to wear one for many years, throughout her long marriage to Jody. During the length of her marriage to Jody, Janie again realizes that she is missing the pear tree. Eventually anything that has resembled her dream in

her marriage to Jody “[leaves] the bedroom and [takes] to living in the parlor” (71). She is in a loveless marriage, but Janie has been oppressed by Jody so long for the sake of the public, that she is unable to leave him like she left Logan. Finally, with Jody’s death, Janie is able to find her freedom from him. At his funeral she sits with a straight face, but on the inside she is “rollicking with the springtime across the world” (88). Once again one gets the sense that Janie still has a chance of finding her pear tree, since she finds her freedom from Jody in the springtime rather than any other season, and spring is when pear trees blossom. As well as being mentally free from Joe, Janie frees herself from the physical restraints he had placed on her and “[burns] up every one of her head rags” (89). In this moment Janie is freeing herself from Jody in the way she freed herself from Logan, by taking off her apron. In death Jody can no longer oppress Janie into social and gender roles for the sake of popular public opinion.

Only with Janie’s third husband, Tea Cake, is she finally free from oppression in her relationships. Once again Janie chooses her husband, but for the first time she chooses for love over everything else. When Janie first meets Tea Cake “she [finds] herself glowing inside” (95-96); a light is switched on inside of her. For the first time Janie and her husband show emotion towards one another. They call each other cutsie names like “honey” and “baby” (126, 127). They display their affection for one another out loud and in public. Janie feels a “self-crushing love” for Teacake and isn’t afraid to hide it (128). Tea Cake also treats Janie as an equal which none of her other husbands have done. With them, she was either an object meant for work or an object meant to sit and look pretty. Janie may be Tea Cake’s wife, but he never once objectifies her as the other two did. Not only that, but they do everything together, and spend whole nights awake just talking to each other. This equality in a relationship is what finally gives Janie her freedom to be who she wants to be. Her “soul [crawls] out from its hiding place” (128) because of her relationship with Tea Cake, and that is her freeing moment. Janie doesn’t need to throw off her apron or burn her head rags with Tea Cake because he allows her the freedom she has always craved. Even after Tea Cake is gone Janie is unafraid to be herself, and marches back into town with “overalls on,” something that women of her time did not wear (4). She has grown accustomed to them while being married to Tea Cake, and finds them comfortable, and no longer cares what others think of her.

Until Janie’s marriage to Tea Cake she is oppressed by every person with whom she has a close relationship. Both Nanny and Logan oppress her for the sake of security in life, for the material things. Nanny believes that Janie will be better off financially secure than emotionally secure. Logan also treats Janie as an object, a tool to help him with the chores on the farm. Janie’s second husband Jody is even worse than Logan. He forces her to obey his gender rules, that women are meant to be seen and not heard. Jody also makes Janie cover her hair because she belongs to him, and only he should be able to see it. Throughout the whole book Janie dreams of having a love like that between a bee and a pear tree blossom. Janie finally finds that kind of love with Tea Cake, who allows her to be herself. Tea Cake teaches Janie how to be free, and even after his death she is able to continue living life on her terms because she has finally found the real Janie.

COMPLETE PORTFOLIO

Nicole Bunstis begins her portfolio by setting up an interesting binary: She declares her desire to be analytical, yet admits that she is “stuck with the arts.” It’s in her happy quagmire where she excels, and she readily admits this and displays it throughout her portfolio. Bunstis goes on in her reflective letter to stress the importance of morality and logic in her life, and both of these are reflected in her narrative essay, “Not for the Faint of Heart.” Here, Bunstis demonstrates how living with others’ expectations can cause us to re-think who we really want to be. The narrative takes on the form of both a story and an internal dialogue in which the writer ferrets out which way her future will turn in light of experiences she has shared. Her interesting use of emphasis and imaginary dialogue gives the piece a light-hearted appeal, yet doesn’t belie its serious message. Bunstis’ second piece, “Letter to the Editor of Leo Magazine: Larry Clark for Teens,” is a persuasive essay in which she writes to convince a local magazine to hold a gallery viewing of a controversial photographer’s work. By pointing out how the artist’s work has impacted her life, Bunstis aims to convince her audience that the same impact can help other teens avoid the fate of some of the photographer’s subjects. Finally, Bunstis uses her response to a text to explore the convoluted nature of the First Amendment in America. “The Boundaries of Freedom” employs a disturbing freedom of speech lawsuit as a text which drives Bunstis’ musings on the First Amendment. The author concludes that whether we embrace or are repelled by controversial speech acts, we must recognize the speaker’s right to commit to the act.

Beth Sawicki utilizes a creative approach for her reflective letter. Using play-writing conventions, Beth constructs her letter as series of “Acts.” This method allows Beth to set up the scene for each individual piece of writing as well as her portfolio as a whole. In “Act I,” Beth sets the tone for her first piece, “Kindred Spirits,” where she utilizes her talent for description and includes details such as the “sticky” evening and “watery lemonade” to make her story come alive. Changing her tone dramatically for her second piece, Beth writes persuasively about the negative effects of second-hand smoke and argues for more stringent laws on smoking in public places. As she says, this piece is written in a “confident and convincing voice and style.” In “Act III” of her reflective letter, Beth points to the “feelings of sadness, disgust and horror experienced upon reading” one chapter out of Eric Schlosser’s Fast Food Nation. Coming full circle, her tone is again sympathetic as she draws out and comments on key sections of Schlosser’s text.

In his reflective letter, Michael Koebel admits to fitting the description of stereotypical Miami University student while longing to stand out from the crowd. His portfolio certainly stood out among all the submissions we received. The reflective letter has an honest, self-deprecating tone that serves the writer well as a means for discussing his own work without sounding arrogant and as a way to draw the reader into his collected pieces. In the reflective letter, Koebel admits he isn’t a master of the narrative; however, he manages to take a small incident he shared with his grandmother and use it to discuss the larger theme of what exactly a hero is. The story works well both as a story and as a contemplation of this broad issue. For his persuasive piece, Koebel narrows his focus to racial profiling. He makes a spirited argument to demonstrate that profiling does indeed exist and backs up his claim with impressive sources. He also calls us to end this offensive practice, doing so by appealing to our sense of community. Finally, in his response to a text, Koebel writes a wonderfully creative piece in which he posits a trial for King Claudius whereby he faces the charges of murder and manslaughter for all eight deaths in

Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. This piece is most refreshing due to the form it takes, a newspaper article complete with a picture of the accused and a call-out quote from the star witness. Taken as a whole, Koebel's portfolio is anything but the "face in the crowd" his reflective letter lamented.

REFLECTIVE LETTER—NICOLE BUNSTIS

Dear Reader:

I always secretly wanted to be a left-brained math whiz, with a knack for the sciences and other technological skills, as well as very athletic. However, my wild imagination, inability to solve math problems correctly, unwillingness to get dirty when clean, and frailty stunted this sort of development in me. Consequently, I am right-brained. By definition, creativity, emotion, global reasoning and intuition dominate my behavior. It isn't what I wished for, but it works. I am stuck with the arts: visual arts, writing, and drama. I express myself through writing. I paint pictures with paint and with words. I write about my life, thoughts and philosophies in a journal, which I one day hope to make into a movie. I am like a play-writer, actor, and stage-manager all in one.

In writing, everyone's goal is to communicate ideas in a sophisticated and appealing manner. I find that my writing sounds as if I am talking or telling a story. I choose to include my memoir, "Not For The Faint Of Heart" in this portfolio. This writing is about my experiences volunteering in a hospital and how they led to a more independent mindset. This is a record of an episode in my life that highlights my road to maturity, explores my values and analyzes my mode of reasoning. This piece is written for all my peers and for myself. It is a self-analysis. It gives a reader a taste of my humor and my way of dealing with problematic situations. I have worked and reworked this piece to no end and I feel that it's the most *important* piece I've ever written.

I always envision the *perfect* piece, the one I'll never be ashamed of, the piece I'll just look at and re-read in splendor. To me this piece will be perfect because the amount of thought and effort I put into it, not necessarily because it is life-altering. "The Boundaries of Freedom" is an essay written for my United States History class and it uses a part of the constitution to explain the outcome of a controversial event in our country's history. It details a social issue and how it was dealt with on an emotional and legal level. I often remember this piece because of the time I invested in it. The essay is significant because it gives a view into my personality and set and displays my morals to readers.

I chose something slightly more unconventional for my response to a text. "Larry Clark For Teens" is a letter written to the editor of a popular independent local magazine. Because of my background in art, I have written an abundance of gallery reviews and analyses. I have examined literature in my writings a great number of times, but this piece responded to a cultural text differently than the others. In my photography class, we were exposed to the powerful photographs of Larry Clark. These photos explore the life of teenagers in a most unglamorous way. In this piece I tried to logically explain why the images are important to keep in the public eye, their impact on me, and how they can benefit my peers and community. The essay, written as a letter, addresses cultural problems and explores a method for solving them through a controversial art exhibit. I feel that this letter, like the other pieces, reinforces my beliefs and values.

Hopefully now you will see the basis of my writing, where it begins, where it ends, and what feelings I have on issues. My writing has been a way for me to demonstrate growth from events, events which either I experienced or studied, by evaluating all their parts and responding personally. I feel that through the pieces I've written I have become a more informed, open-minded, and mature individual. I want to show that my writing is more than a document saved on Microsoft Word. These pieces should serve as a clear reflection of me, as a student

and member of society. I feel confident going into my college studies with an open mind, yet a strong belief system. I am right-brained. I hope you will see how my writing is right-brained: full of emotion, creativity and global reasoning.

Cordially,

The Writer

Not For the Faint of Heart

It happened in the summer month of July, right before I was to enter my freshman year of high school. I came to my pediatrician's office for a physical, some blood work and an update of my immunizations. I don't think I was even aware of how scared I was, or should have been. I was sitting in the patient room jittering my legs, banging on things and hurriedly flipping through pages of brochures about influenza and ADHD. Interesting literature, such as Dr. Seuss books, chicken pox vaccine information packets, and human anatomy posters surrounded me, but I couldn't keep my focus on anything. The nurse stepped in and I took deep breaths as she prepared the shots.

"It's just a few little pricks," she cooed. I received one "little" prick in the finger, one in my lower arm, one in the left shoulder and one in the right shoulder.

"That wasn't so bad," I proclaimed, admiring my Looney Toons band-aids. The next thing I remember, I was riding on an elephant behind a pair of camels onto Noah's Ark. I looked up and there was this peculiar lady with frizzy orange hair saying, "Hellooo...open your eyes...can you hear me?" and my mother was standing over me, in fright, shaking my hands up and down. I managed to focus long enough to glimpse at my environment, only to see depictions of Noah's Ark and zoo animals all over the place. Once more my eyes rolled back into my head. And so these were the first *and second times* that I ever fainted.

That was the day I made my decision. It was never really going to work out for the medical profession and me. Ever heard of predestination? no, not Puritanical Christian beliefs on predestination, what I'm referring to is a parent's visions of predestination. When my parents immigrated to the United States from the Soviet Union, they brought with them a few hundred dollars, determination to succeed and a strong set of values. Included within the values was a short list of professions their daughters must strive to make their own. They were as follows: doctor, lawyer. Special considerations may sometimes be made for engineers and college professor. Where they came from, there was nothing nobler than a professor or a doctor. Here, in America, doctors and lawyers are considered noble.

Compromises must be made.

We were limited. Yet, I can't say we minded it. We like to do as we are told. I admire my parents after all. It's easy to build nothing out of something, but to build something out of nothing is the challenge. Because of this I pledge to them the right to tell me what to do, or rather guide me in making smart decisions. As you may have guessed, this day in July was a sad one for my parents because it inevitably meant that one of the two suitable professions for their youngest daughter was forever banned as an option.

Now I had to be a lawyer. Well, that was just swell. I don't think at this point I had won an argument yet (Well, maybe with my stuffed animals when we played "Court," but even then they always had such great points!). Yet, my mother never stopped convincing me that I was meant to be a lawyer because I was such an outgoing and articulate child that loved reason and logic. Accepting that I am a whimsical and idealistic young adult, I figure my parents are right to steer me away from following my instincts that are telling me to take a couple years off and work on a European cruise ship. So, this resolution was acceptable for all of us, but I never stopped hearing "we need a doctor in the family." I can't accuse them of directing that at me. I know they want what is best. I know they will make sure I do what is best, or else I won't do anything at all. I figured this was the prime time to start my explorations.

My sister, Yana, is a nurse at Baptist Hospital East. This past summer I decided to volunteer at the hospital in her unit, which is Coronary Care. A typical patient residing in this unit is post open-heart surgery or post heart attack. By volunteering here I could at least gain some core understanding to my judgments about the medical profession. I didn't want that single negative episode to keep me from exploring a potential career path.

The haunting beep of the alarm woke me at six o'clock on a *summer* morning. Confused, I bolted upright and recalled that I was going to *work*. When we arrived at work, I followed my sister into the unit timidly, and found a seat away from the commotion until I was given jobs to do. All the nurses from day shift were scampering around trying to pick patients and get the information from the night shift nurses' charts before they headed home. I sat back idly waiting, wishing for someone, anyone, to give me instructions. Before I could rethink my hope to do any labor, the Charge Nurse, Paul, began rattling off commands right and left. Be careful what you wish for; so, so true. That day I played fun games like Stock the Linen Cart, Inventory the Supplies, Make Copies, Put together Hundreds of Charts, and Wipe Off and Sterilize the Heart Monitors and Furniture. I never really believed that a 12+-hour shift was hard before. Now I knew. This was only reinforcing my original doubts about the medical field.

I cannot lie, though. It was really quite exciting when the doctors made their appearances. When they came in I watched and listened to them in admiration as they turned the nurses' comments about the patients' behavior patterns and recovery into a prognosis that just hit the spot. I was so impressed by their knowledge. The idea, in general, is quite remarkable. It's a common notion that the best things in life are free. The best thing in life that isn't always free is health. When it comes down to it, health is the only thing worth paying for. These doctors provide it; they insure it and they help maintain it. Sometimes my sister would introduce the doctors to me and they asked, obviously uninterested, if I was in high school, yet. The inquiry I hated the most was the mechanical and pre-programmed: "So, are you thinking of becoming a nurse, like your sister?" which in fact meant, "Humor me and tell me your dream in life is to study medicine and help others." "Oh, no, no, sir/madam. I am not sure that this profession is for me. I don't think it's for the faint-hearted. Blood and shots just aren't my cup of tea." I said all this, while they stared back at me, obviously disinterested, and I thought that maybe, I should lie to them. Maybe I should say, "Why, yes, of course Dr. Whitelabcoat, I've wanted to be a doctor since I was seven," and should've reassured them that they did it for that same reason, too. Maybe that way I could have sparked some interest and not received the same blank stare from the same stressed out and preoccupied face every time.

I even started to feel bad. I felt like I was there with misguided intentions. This needed some careful consideration. Sometimes I deliberated, "Maybe; I'll just make my parents happy and go to medical school and surpass all expectations." All I needed to snap me out of that muse were the words, "Hey, Yana's sister! Would you run this down to the lab for me really quick?" Ah, the lab. At this point I recalled why this wasn't for me. Blood work, stool samples, urine samples and I couldn't even begin to imagine what else lurked in those seemingly sterile plastic baggies labeled, "Warning: Potentially Hazardous Specimen," or something very close. Whether or not that's how it was marked, that's what it cried out to me. "Open me and this whole place gets the Black Plague and it's ALL YOUR FAULT!" Not like I ever really *wanted* to open the bag, having known the contents was already too much information. This bag was the reason why people weren't supposed to want to work in hospitals. Not only this bag, but also bedpans. Bedpans ought to be the number one reason why people should not want to work in hospitals or clinics. The laboratory test baggies should be the second reason. Needles

should be third. Shots and needles go together, keep in mind. However, I think wearing scrubs to work and having one of the most respectable professions at the same time must be reason number one for *wanting* to be in the medical field. In any case, I felt like I was still missing the point.

Maybe, just maybe, that *was* the point. I couldn't accept my destiny. Why couldn't I? The plan was to be a lawyer. Right? Wrong. No. That isn't right for me. It's coming together, but I don't want to let it. If I pick my future career I have to start focusing on it. That means I have to figure out how to apply it to my life now. Essentially, it means I have to grow up. It's what I secretly want. I've tried to fight it, but I can't any longer. I am not a little kid anymore, and that means I really have to stop saying, "yucky!" Besides, needles and blood are something one could get used to. Until the early years of high school, I wanted to be a psychologist. This profession is not a part of "the list;" only a psychiatrist is allowed because to be one, you must go to med school. Consequently, it would not work. But I don't want to hand out drug rights to unstable individuals all day long. I want to help people, physically and mentally. I'm thinking. What's the answer?! I have to make myself happy. I have to create a life for myself. I want to find a path that I will enjoy taking. But I want to listen to my parents, seeing as how I've never really known them to be wrong... What do I want? I want to fly a hot air balloon around the world. No, be serious. What do I logically want? I want to wake up in the morning feeling alive. I want to be enthralled with my job, with my day, with my life. I want to study and work with people. I want to analyze them and help them. I do want to learn and research. I want to work with the human brain. I want to be successful. I want to make my parents proud. I want... oh, I can't say it. I can't admit it. That would mean I have been a huge phony all this time. But I have to grow up sometime. Okay. Okay. I'll do it today. I want to be a doctor. I want to be a brain doctor. I want to be neurologist.

There. I confess. I want what my parents want for me.

EXPLANATORY, EXPLORATORY, OR PERSUASIVE ESSAY—NICOLE BUNSTIS

Letter To The Editor Of Leo Magazine: Larry Clark For Teens

I am an avid reader of *Leo Magazine*. When I go to a magazine stand and see nothing but metal wires and emptiness, I become very disheartened. I am a senior in high school. I read *Leo* not only for the articles, but to find out about interesting exhibitions, shows, and dining. Your magazine helps to link my friends and me with the best *safe* entertainment our city has to offer. I put an emphasis on “safe” because there is still a problem. High school students are still drinking and doing drugs in alarming numbers. These facts are startling and the numbers too high. I think something should be done in our city to keep kids away from these illegal and life-altering practices .

In the early seventies, a budding photographer, Larry Clark, published a controversial book of photos entitled *Tulsa*. This book showed problems with teenagers in the suburbs of Tulsa, Oklahoma. Images of drugs, sex, guns, and violence filled the pages. It was especially startling because these horrid scenes were exhibited in a seemingly wholesome suburban life setting. I was able to see the images from Clark’s book, *Tulsa*. His documentation stirs many emotions. Above all, it is shocking. I think teenagers could benefit from seeing a Larry Clark exhibition because oftentimes they do not know the magnitude of their actions when they partake in sex, drugs, and violence. One might argue that bringing images of kids doing illegal things would not help, but would only worsen the situation. By taking these photos, Larry Clark has *completely* de-glamorized this lifestyle. The photographs show teenagers fighting, beaten-up girls, teenage parents, drug abuse, teens with guns and gunshot wounds, and other disturbing images. There is a particularly poignant sequence of images taken by Mr. Clark that has remained imprinted on my mind. The first picture is of a young high school girl, at least eight months pregnant. She is sitting in a chair in a dim room, shooting amphetamine into her arm. The next image is of an older woman holding flowers, surrounded by people wearing black. She is clearly mourning. We find out that this woman is the mother of the young pregnant girl portrayed in the previous photo. The next photograph is a bird’s-eye-view of a newborn baby in a casket, surrounded by flowers, about to be buried. These three images are enough to make any person see why drugs and unprotected sex ruins lives. The girl’s addiction controlled her life to such an extent that she could not even quit while pregnant to save her baby.

Because of such photographs, I believe that bringing Larry Clark’s work to a local gallery or museum would benefit the community. Teenagers are told by adults to say no to drugs, drinking, and sex all day long, but do we really *hear* the message? We can hear speeches by recovering addicts, but you’ve got to see it to believe it. When I saw images of kids cutting school and spending their days wasting away in a house in suburbia, smoking, shooting amphetamine, sniffing inhalants, desperate to get high, I was shaken. I kept imagining the photo of the four boys sitting in the living room, smoking and shooting up. There is a framed picture of the mother on the mantle, looking towards the boys. There is a painting of Jesus hanging above the fireplace, looking away. The photo has so much meaning. The situation is quite ironic. The viewer begins to wonder where it all went wrong. Was it due to a lack of parenting, a lack of religion, or a lack of understanding the reality of the situation? This is why we need to expose teens and the community to these images so we can work on changing things. We are not a lost generation.

Now you may see the impact these images can have. Seeing these photographs might keep a potential teen addict away from even considering drugs. It may make someone think twice before playing with a loaded gun. It may make a couple of teens a little more wary of using protection to prevent pregnancy or STDs. It's important not to censor this, but to talk about it. We need to address these issues to at a young age, before the situation arises. It needs to be made clear that teenagers aren't invincible. It always makes more sense to try to prevent a problem before it starts instead of solving it after it has generated itself. As Larry Clark, himself said, "Once the needle goes in, it never comes out." Our city's youth needs a Larry Clark exhibition to help make sure the needle never goes in.

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The Boundaries of Freedom

In the midst of trying to uphold status and keep her reputable name as the “land of the free” in tact, America often sways in the face of right and wrong. There lies a fine line between protecting your rights without violating the rights of others. What happens when a group of neo-Nazis want to hold a demonstration in a predominately Jewish suburb? You can argue freedom of speech (and assembly), while one can retort, saying it would violate another’s right to feel safe and secure in their community. In the Bill of Rights, The First Amendment of the United States Constitution, states “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances” (usconstitution.net). Everyone has the right to religion; everyone has the right from religion. Everyone also has the right to discriminate against someone else’s religion. Technically, nothing protects one group of people from bigotry against another group of people, until the hate group actually takes some sort of action. It’s true they may not pose a threat, but isn’t that just taking freedom of speech too far ?

In 1976, Frank Collin, leader of the neo-Nazi National Socialist Party of America (NSPA), decided that he wanted to hold demonstrations in any of several park districts in the Chicago area. One in particular became the breeding ground for 1978’s notorious First Amendment litigation. That place was the vastly Jewish-populated suburb of Skokie, Illinois. About sixty percent of Skokie’s residents were of the Jewish faith and several thousand were Holocaust survivors. Upon receiving Collin’s request, Skokie replied by informing the NSPA of its new regulations: obtain a permit at least thirty days in advance of the scheduled event, have a \$350,000.00 indemnity bond posted in advance, no person may wear military style uniforms, and nothing could be distributed that promotes the hate group. Frank Collin and his supporters then submitted an application for a permit. Skokie said no, because they would be marching in military-style uniforms. Judge Bernard Decker of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois issued a preliminary injunction not allowing Skokie to pass the regulations that were aimed to prevent the NSPA from rallying, declaring them unconstitutional by the First Amendment. Then the American Civil Liberties Union began to support the Nazi sympathizer’s cause and helped them file a lawsuit against Skokie. An appeal in favor of Skokie was issued, but the ordinances were still deemed unconstitutional. Three days later, Skokie gave Frank Collin and his supporters a permit to march in front of Skokie’s Village Hall. Almost a month passed and Collin and his band of devotees called off their demonstration, possibly because the amount of counter-demonstrators surpassed the actual amount of Nazi partisans. This is similar to what would happen in Chicago the following month. This march was not a success. This conflict started October 4, 1976 and was drawn out until June 28, 1978.

In the end, the citizens of Skokie were left burdened with heartache and painful reprise. We are left to wonder why the Nazi’s rights were taken into consideration, while the citizen’s rights would be violated. Collin, the leader of the neo-Nazi Socialist Party of America said, “I hope they’re terrified. I hope they’re shocked. Because we’re coming to get them again. I don’t care if someone’s mother or father or brother died in the gas chambers. The unfortunate thing is not that there were six million Jews who died. The unfortunate thing is that there were so many Jewish survivors,” (Strum 192). Does a sick individual who supported America’s opposition in World War II deserve to possess the same rights as individuals who want nothing

but to protect themselves and their neighbors from reliving the horror of “The Final Solution?” The verdict issued by the Supreme Court says, ‘Yes, he or she does.’

The Proposed Nazi march in Skokie proves that good doesn’t always prevail over evil. You can argue that the NSPA didn’t end up marching anyway, so what is the debate about? The fact of the matter is that they were allowed, had they decided to, and there was absolutely nothing Skokie could do. Though small, the neo-Nazis pose a threat to Jews similar to the threat Confederate supporters pose to Blacks. They may not be a majority, but hate groups make everyday life a little more unhinged for their targets.

Yes, America is the land of the free, but all of us are not so brave as to keep ourselves from being irked by the thought of someone wishing they could take our lives because we are of a different creed. We, according to our great Declaration of Independence, are entitled to our certain, unalienable rights: life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Being a Holocaust survivor in Skokie, would you feel happy and safe knowing that threatening Nazi followers may be out to get you? Yes, the neo-Nazi Socialist Party of America is entitled to its constitutional rights based on the Bill of Rights, however, the Fourteenth Amendment directly comes into play. It states, “All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws” (usconstitution.net). In other words, if you’re privileged enough to be a citizen of our great nation, you are allowed due process, or basic fairness. Laws must be enforced in order to protect the people and make sure they are being treated equally. Aren’t justice and freedom what keep our national, as well as local, defenses at work all hours of the day? So spins a never-ending web of rights in which our grievances are trapped. Debate after debate drags on, but the issues all come down to a matter of popular opinion. The proposed Nazi march in Skokie was a real and monumental event. It proves that while our form of government is probably the best in the world, things manage to slide, unscathed, through the system. Freedom of speech or not, due process should always protect the unfortunate who are discriminated against. The only way to stop hate is to not allow it to breed and blossom in the first place. All people, after all, are created equal.

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REFLECTIVE LETTER—BETH SAWICKI

Dear Miami University composition teachers,

Fade in. The setting is a modest brick house in Marietta, Georgia (twenty minutes north of Atlanta); the time period is the present day; the intended audience consists of those who will carefully scrutinize the works within this portfolio. We pan across a bedroom smothered in typical teenage décor—stuffed animals, pictures of friends, CDs, books, knick knacks and trinkets—and stop upon reaching the corner that houses the Dell computer at which these pieces of prose were conceived and created. The mastermind behind this collection of compositions is an eighteen-year-old Miami University undergraduate who can boast a myriad of poems and a number of short stories and unfinished novels. There are the products of a writing career that spans more than a decade. However, as is evidenced by the style of this particular letter, her true creative passions are playwriting and screenwriting.

This letter serves as the overture for a portfolio presented in three acts: Short Story, Explanatory Essay, and Textual Response. Sit back, relax and enjoy. Intermission may be taken at the reader's expense and leisure. The concession stand offers a wide variety of refreshments for the return journey.

Act I (“Kindred Spirits”) is a spin-off of a creative writing assignment from senior year. It is a fictional account of desire, betrayal and heartbreak. The setting is the beautiful American Southwest. This piece stars Gloria Cunningham, a rebellious young woman from a strict family and a naïve dreamer out to answer the call of her soul. “Kindred Spirits” demonstrates the author's love of adjectives, alliteration and in-depth details and delivers a reminder that hope can prevail in almost any situation despite the circumstances. The story received rave reviews from creative writing students and teachers alike, and the author considers it one of her finest works from her senior year of high school.

Act II (“Up in Smoke”) opens with a scream—of laughter, that is, thanks to Tex Williams. It is a highly opinionated essay that leaves no doubt as to why smoking disgusts the writer. Composed especially for the Miami University portfolio, it provides several factual examples that make smoking out to be a revolting habit, not to mention a public nuisance to those who want to keep their lungs tobacco-free. “Up in Smoke” is written in a unique, confident, and convincing voice and style that occasionally causes even the toughest critics—high school AP English teachers—to crack smiles and bestow praise.

Act III (“Blood, Sweat and Slaughter”), a response paper to the best-selling book Fast Food Nation, received a round of applause from awestruck English students at its unveiling, as well as a grade of 98. It spells out the feelings of sadness, disgust and horror experienced upon reading “The Most Dangerous Job,” arguably the novel's hardest chapter to finish. The essay combines personal opinions with passages from the actual text, and the result is both persuasive and profound.

Despite its lack of an all-star cast and a glowing review from Roger Ebert, this portfolio bares the soul of an eighteen-year-old, Southern teenager, having already discovered a burning and hopefully lifelong passion—writing. It is a compilation of what the writer believes to be her finest work from her upperclassman years of high school. It is the result of years spent with pen in hand, sitting in front of a computer screen, practicing the craft, constantly tweaking and perfecting to meet certain levels of authorial satisfaction.

Take a bow. Fade to black. Roll the credits. Cut and print. That's a wrap.

Kindred Spirits

A hot, dust-filled wind swept the colorful landscape just outside Albuquerque before making its way into the city. Tiny particles of sand and dirt swirled upward, with the sudden breeze, and firmly embedded themselves into Gloria's dark eyes. She gasped as her eyes began to water. The tears running down her face felt so good that she allowed them to flow, and her squared shoulders visibly loosened in relief. She'd been forbidding herself to cry all day, but a few specks of dust were all that it took for her to finally release her emotions.

Albuquerque was as all cities are in the late afternoon. From the balcony of her apartment, Gloria saw a multicolored hot air balloon floating in the distance, gearing the city up for the annual Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta, the start date of which was fast approaching. The black Earth Mother living in the apartment beside Gloria's had left the sliding door to her balcony open, and the sound of her rich singing voice drifted into the dry air outside.

Gloria squeezed her eyes shut and allowed her mind to be overtaken by a different pair of eyes. These eyes were ice blue and filled with burning love for her, and, at the same time, filled with a deep pain and a well-hidden sadness.

She reached up and fingered the silver cross that hung in the hollow of her throat. He had been Catholic; her parents, on the other hand, practically ran the Southern Baptist Church. They had raised Gloria, their only child, in rural North Carolina and had disapproved of everything she'd ever wanted to do—highlight her coffee-colored hair, attend a neighbor's bat-mitzvah, move out west, teach kindergarten—but their biggest loathing had been David Flaherty. After a late-night argument a month earlier, during which Gloria, in a fit of rage that resulted in a throbbing headache and three smashed plates, had finally spat out that she loved him.

Gloria had been something of a coquette during and after high school (her parents had enrolled her in a local Christian college and made her live at home while attending), but she hadn't experienced true love until David. They had met on a summer evening at a park while attending a Christian music festival. He was beginning a career as a chiropractor; she was studying to get into law school, to please her parents, but was secretly planning to leave home to pursue a degree in education as soon as she saved up enough money from her minimum-wage job.

The evening had been sticky and mosquito-laden, and she'd wandered through the park alone for a while before the concert began, sipping from a cup of watery lemonade. Suddenly he had accidentally bumped her from behind, causing her drink to slosh over the rim of its cup and all down the front of her T-shirt. He'd apologized and offered her a fistful of stiff napkins. She'd met his gaze to tell him it was okay and fell speechless; one look into his eyes caused every positive emotion she had ever felt to rush to the surface until she became dizzy and breathless, and he had to ask several times if she was alright. They went out for coffee after the concert and Gloria, for the first time ever, felt whole, as though she were being appreciated for the woman she truly was on the inside, not the person everyone around her expected her to be.

But Joseph and Margaret Cunningham would not see their only daughter dating a Catholic. Upon meeting David, they were not dazzled by his eyes or won over by his lopsided grin, and they forbade Gloria from seeing him. In return, she performed her first major acts of rebellion by sneaking out of the house to meet him. With each secret visit, she fell deeper in love and was certain that he was experiencing the same feelings. Although she was terrified of what her parents would do if they caught her, she was sure that things would work out. After all, she'd heard time and again that true love always found a way of overcoming the odds.

However, during their final two weeks in North Carolina, David's entire personality had changed. He was the oldest of seven kids and was forced to stay close to home in order to help his single mother. His was a restless spirit, and he wanted nothing more than to sail into the great beyond, but felt too tied down with his family life.

"Let's fly away," he'd finally said to Gloria on that fateful night. They'd been walking through the park in which they'd first met. "Let's just get out of here."

"And do what?" Gloria inquired.

"Anything. Let's move west—Seattle, Los Angeles, you name it. You teach squabbling brats to your heart's content, I'll crack a few backs to pay the bills. We can see the desert and hot air balloons and the Pacific Ocean. We'll be free, G. Let's do it."

Gloria had felt giddy on her way home. So consumed was her mind that she forgot about being quiet upon entering her house. The second she closed the front door behind her, Margaret's stern voice beckoned her to the kitchen.

Gloria entered and, to avoid immediate conversation, began to help her mother dry the supper dishes. "Where were you?" Margaret questioned without facing her daughter. "And don't lie to me."

Gloria bit her lip, knowing that her mother could easily detect fibs. "Seeing David," she replied meekly.

That had launched mother and daughter into a heated battle, which ended with Gloria's tearful confession. Afterward she'd pounded up the stairs to her room, packed two duffel bags, and left for David's house early the next morning.

Gloria sighed and leaned over the railing of her balcony as the memories rushed over her. Next door, her neighbor, whose name was Georgia St. George, emerged from inside her apartment, cradling Melchizedek, her cocker spaniel puppy. She was humming a lilting gospel melody, and her gray eyes seemed to hold the wisdom of many ages. She gazed into the distance at the hot air balloon, wishing to join it in its quest for the horizon.

Gloria squinted to get a better look at Georgia, wondering what was going on inside her head. She looked as though she'd seen better days. Perhaps she'd been hurt, too. Only a few days after their arrival in Albuquerque, David had vanished into the night with most of the money and all of Gloria's heart. Perhaps Georgia had tolerated a similar situation. Even though she didn't know the older woman, Gloria felt as though they were destined to be kindred spirits.

Sensing eyes on her, Georgia turned to face Gloria. She continued to hum as her lined face stretched into a smile at the sight of the young woman's inquisitive expression. Gloria smiled in return and noted that Georgia also wore a cross around her neck.

Gloria Cunningham no longer had the support of her parents. The man who she'd thought would be the love of her life had merely strung her along in order to steal from her. And, although her future wasn't as bright as the balloon hovering above the city, she knew that there was hope. She saw it in the eyes of Georgia St. George, and she felt it in her own soul. As she felt the dust in the wind that blew her newly highlighted hair into her face, and quickly glanced into her own apartment to see what was hanging on her refrigerator (pictures drawn especially for her by the kids who attended the daycare center at which she worked), she suddenly knew that everything would turn out okay.

Reaching for her cross, Gloria sent another smile in Georgia's direction before staring at the setting sun, glimmering off the city buildings. *No more tears*, she promised herself. She no longer felt that she had reason to cry.

Up in Smoke

“Smoke, smoke, smoke that cigarette...Tell St. Peter at the Golden Gate/That you hate to make him wait/But you gotta have another cigarette.” –Tex Williams

I was recently treated to a sickening and disturbing sight while exiting the mall after a day of upgrading my wardrobe, courtesy of Ann Taylor. While digging through my seemingly-bottomless purse in search my car keys, I spotted an older woman standing near a series of ashtrays, bending over a stroller that contained, who I assumed to be her grandson, and cooing sweetly into his face. *How cute* was my first reaction, but it was soon replaced with *Oh my God*, for there, clenched between two of the old lady’s manicured fingertips, was a burning cigarette. I watched in horror for several seconds as she alternated between taking voracious drags on that cigarette and babbling at the baby, bathing his precious face in secondhand smoke.

Rather than flying into a series of theatrics as my brother does whenever he spots someone smoking (choking, gasping for breath, and wheezing “I’m dying”), I ran for my car, racking my brain for the reason why people begin such a habit. I seem to come across smokers everywhere. The airport’s smoking room (my mother refers to it as “the aquarium”) is always full of people frantically getting their fixes before boarding and attempting to survive long, smoke-free flights. Street gutters are always filled with the stubby remnants of what were once Newports and Camels. I get especially irritated at restaurants – no sooner has the waitress retreated to the kitchen with my drink order when someone sitting at one of the adjoining tables lights up. While he has already finished eating, I get to enjoy the smell of his carbon monoxide in addition to that of my club sandwich. Thank goodness the majority of the restaurants in my community are now nonsmoking.

It boggles my mind to think that smoking is still a major problem in our country. After all the findings on its dangers – cancer, higher possibility of stroke, death – people still continue to light up. I know firsthand how fatal this habit can be; I’ve seen multiple family members meet untimely ends at the hands of the Marlboro man. I fear for young children who grow up around smoking parents and siblings. Who knows what the future holds for the poor baby in the stroller outside the mall – he had been squirming and wrinkling his nose whenever his grandmother’s smoke had gone down his throat and into his tiny lungs, but the old woman had seemed oblivious. There was no doubt in my mind that she loved her grandson with her whole heart, but I was still shocked at her blatant disregard for his health. It’s no wonder that so many children of smoking parents grow up to be smokers themselves; they’ve spent so many years breathing in secondhand poison that they’re practically smokers already. But with all of today’s research on the long-term affects of smoking, I cannot completely understand why they would even want to experiment.

According to “Parents: The Anti-Drug,” a website dedicated to warning parents of the dangers of peer pressure and offering tips on how to speak with their children, nicotine only offers a short high. This brief feeling of bliss is followed by depression and fatigue, causing a smoker to feel a strong urge for another high and therefore to reach for his cigarettes. I personally would rather find a worthwhile activity that interests me and get my (natural) high from doing what I love. I have never seen the attraction in blackening my lungs, destroying the breath that I work hard to keep minty fresh, and transforming my voice into a raspy whisper, frequently interrupted by coughs. I do not want my entire life to be controlled by an overpriced

box of tiny, tobacco-filled rolls of paper. I applaud people who press for laws to control the public places in which smokers can get their quick fixes. I'm not saying that people's rights to smoke should be taken away, but I am saying that *everyone's* rights should be respected. That includes the rights of people like me – those of us who choose not to smoke.

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(pg. 110 – Tex Williams lyrics)

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Blood, Sweat and Slaughter: A Response to “The Most Dangerous Job” from Eric Schlosser’s

Fast Food Nation

As I walk along the fence, a group of cattle approach me, look me straight in the eye, like dogs hoping for a treat, and follow me out of some mysterious impulse. I stop and try to absorb the whole scene: the cool breeze, the cattle and their gentle lowing, the cloudless sky, and the steam rising from the plant in the moonlight. Then I notice that the building does have one window, a small square of light on the second floor. It offers a glimpse of what's hidden behind this huge blank façade. Through the little window you can see bright red carcasses on hooks, going round and round (172).

I admit it—I cried. I cried for the slaughterhouse employees who cannot seem to find better jobs, for the cleaning crews who put their very lives on the line every time they work, and for the millions of cattle that are killed annually just so people can eat at McDonald's. This portion of the book affected me more than any of the other chapters. The gruesome facts and details, and ultimate feeling of sadness that followed my learning them, made it difficult for me to make it through the pages I was required to read.

The amounts and types of injuries inflicted upon slaughterhouse workers every year, with “missing fingers, broken bones, deep lacerations...amputated limbs...torn muscles, slipped disks, [and] pinched nerves” among them, are horrifying (175). And worse yet, most of the time, the slaughterhouse owners and executives do not care at all. Sometimes, “workers were compelled to show up for work on the same day as a surgery or the day after an amputation... [because] staff members [received] bonuses and prizes when the number of lost workdays was kept low” (181). Don't these people have morals? Is it impossible for them to think of anyone but themselves? In today's money-hungry society, many people will find any reason to put their wealth before the safety and well being of others. Some will even go so far as to lie in federal court when questioned about the injury rate among their employees, as was the case with IBP in 1987. “The company kept two sets of injury logs: one of them recording every injury and illness at the slaughterhouse, the other provided to visiting OSHA inspectors...At congressional hearings on meatpacking...the chief executive of IBP denied under oath that two sets of logs were ever kept...” (180). Although nearly 2,000 injuries occurred among IBP workers that year, the OSHA was informed of only 160. Why? So one of the company's top dogs could line his pockets with a few more dollars? What about the thousands of laborers who now have only one arm, eight or nine fingers, or severe, lifelong back problems and those who suffer in silence, unable or unwilling to speak out against the greedy, egocentric officials who provide for them by reluctantly forking over the minimum wage? What has society come down to, when the size of a man's wallet comes ahead of his concern for the protection of others?

I was also troubled by the grim descriptions of the ways in which cattle are butchered in today's slaughterhouses. The images of kidneys being ripped out of animals with a man's bare hands, cattle's necks being slashed and men and women wading through “blood that's ankle deep” were almost too much for me to bear (171). Schlosser creates a tone that disturbs, disgusts and depresses – one that causes a person to recall every detail of this chapter the next time he or she picks up a hamburger. What's a person to do – become a vegetarian? Many do. However, many others realize that humans are at the top of the food chain. Human life began with hunters and gatherers who were forced to chase and kill the majority of their food. Bottom line: *people eat meat*, and have been since early man, as evidenced by stone weapons discovered

with ancient human remains. However, it is not nearly as necessary today as it was thousands of years ago; people no longer go out with spears to search for and slaughter tonight's dinner. As a matter of fact, hunting is now considered a sport, not a life skill. Further-more, huge portions of the animals that were killed for food did not go to waste like they do now.

I am grateful to live in an age where I have options, where I will not starve if I am unable to eat meat. There are a vast variety of foods that can be eaten today. Schlosser makes me question whether meat needs to remain a necessary nutrient for me. After all, some studies are now showing that it is healthier to reduce the amount of meat, if not altogether eliminate it, in the diet.

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REFLECTIVE LETTER—MICHAEL KOEBEL

Dear Miami University English Professor,

I want to be perfectly honest with you. Honesty is the best policy, right? Well, this is hard for me to say, so bear with me. All right, here it goes: I'm the stereotypical Miami student. Wow, it feels good to get that off my chest. It's something I never wanted to have to admit. However, after months of hearing everyone tell me that I am, I have no choice but to fess up to it. Let's look at the facts: I was a varsity football player, I have the spiked-up, gelled hair, and, yes, in the winter, I even sport the North Face fleece. I really am the stereotypical Miami student.

One of my biggest worries about coming to Miami University was the fact that it had the reputation for not being very diverse. In fact, in the college book, *The Best 345 Colleges*, a first-year Miami University student is quoted as saying that, "[Miami students] talk, dress, and look the same." Another student says that "it is hard to fit in if you are not rich, thin and white." Well, I am white, I'm pretty well-off financially, and last time I checked, I was of average height and weight. On one hand, I guess that's good news; I'm going to fit in and I am going to have a lot in common with the other Miami students. Then again, maybe I'll fit in too much and will become just another face in the crowd. So somehow I have had to figure out a way to separate myself from everyone else. I had to find my own way to show how unique I am. After reading my portfolio, I think it is very apparent that I have found a way to express my uniqueness and individuality through my writing.

Of the three pieces in my portfolio, the piece that best shows the creativity in my writing is the piece I have written in response to a text. My senior year in high school, we read *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare and had to choose some aspect of the play to which we would respond and analyze. I decided to investigate which of the eight deaths in *Hamlet* King Claudius could be held responsible for if he was put on trial in today's society. I wrote my paper as if I were writing an article for a newspaper. This allowed me to incorporate all the information and my opinions in a unique and interesting to read format. The main objective was to write a paper in which someone who had never opened a copy of *Hamlet* could be led to understand the events and could make their own opinions about King Claudius's involvement and responsibility in the incidents. I chose to use this paper in my portfolio because it really sums up the way that I try to write. I am always trying to find a different and unique angle from which to write in order to separate my work from that of other students.

I find it difficult to distinguish myself when I write fiction. I've never been a very good storyteller. Writing fiction has never been something that I really enjoyed doing. When I'm told to write a short story, all I can ever think of doing is jotting down "once upon a time" and "the end" with a bunch of craziness in between. But, that's not always a good story. In my opinion, the best stories in life are realistic ones. That is why for my narrative I decided to write a story about my grandmother from when I was a little boy. My narrative allowed me to incorporate the tools of the fiction writer, while never wandering too far from the real-life events and people that mean so much to me.

Real-life events led me to the topic of my persuasive piece. Edwin Schlossberg once said that, "the skill of writing is to create a context in which other people can think." When I write a persuasive paper, I try to keep this quote in mind. Writing persuasive pieces such as the one in my portfolio is my favorite type of writing to do because it is my chance to get the reader to think about something and question a topic from an angle that they may have not thought to look at before. I chose this persuasive piece, *Arrested for Driving While Black*, because I origi-

nally didn't agree with what I had written. This paper was first written for a debate my senior year; I drew the side of the argument with which I did not agree and about which I was not comfortable writing. This made writing the piece much more difficult, but I grew tremendously as a writer by the time the piece was completed because I was forced to write out of my element and expand my horizons.

Now that I have explained a little bit about each of the pieces in my portfolio, it's time for you to read them for yourself and hopefully experience a little of what I believe my writing has to offer. A writer's work is what defines the writer; these three pieces define who I am as a writer. Come this fall, while I may look like just another face in the crowd, I know that when it comes to my writing, I am unique. I hope that after reading my portfolio, you feel the same.

Sincerely,

A Class of 2008 Redhawk

A Hero in Her Kitchen

She wore an apron and not a cape. She walked with a subtle limp rather than flying through the air. She could barely step over my strewn Legos, much less leap over a tall building. Yet, she was still my hero.

In class we read about Beowulf, Arthur, and Achilles and other “Classic” heroes. The nerds fixate on Zelda and Orpheus. The class clowns can’t make it through such discussions without someone mentioning the names of Superman or Wonder Woman. But they aren’t heroes to me. This is a time in our country when the word “hero” has been given a new meaning. Our comic book perception of what heroes are has drastically been altered to a more realistic view. September 11th showed the country and the world what true heroes are and that they can be the most ordinary people doing extraordinary things. Following that tragedy, I looked at my life, and, for the first time, began to recognize the heroes surrounding me.

When I was little, I noticed a small door in the corner of my grandmother’s attic; it couldn’t have been more than three and a half feet high. I would pull on the handle of that door for hours trying to get it open because I so desperately wanted to see what was inside. My curiosity was running wild, and I had to know what was in there. I figured it had to be something amazing for my grandmother to keep it locked so tight. I would make up these stories and tell them to my sister of how grandma was probably some superhero and that door led to a secret room where she kept her capes, all lined up neatly like in the Bat Cave. I would aver that was where she hid her superpowers because she didn’t want anyone to know about them. I liked making up stories like that because I loved the idea of having my grandmother as a superhero.

One day, while visiting my grandmother, I finally determined to take bold and decisive action.

“Grandma, what’s behind that door?”

“What door, Mikey?”

“The tiny door in the attic.”

“Oh my, I didn’t even know you’d been up there!”

Not to be deterred, I again queried, “Well, what’s behind the door?”

Her answer surprised me. She told me that behind that little door was where she kept her photo albums and all of her family mementos.

“Why do you have them there instead of where you can see them?” I just couldn’t understand why someone would lock away their memories in an attic.

“It’s simple, dear. You, your dad, your sister, and the rest of the family are the most important things in my world. All of the pictures and items that capture who you are and who we are together are my most valuable treasures. I want them to be safe: it’s the safest place in the house.”

In the end, there were no hidden superpowers behind that door. There was no hidden passage or secret room. I was right about one thing though. My grandmother did keep behind that door what made her a hero. I had just failed to recognize that it was her love for family that was her greatest strength. Her unveiling may have lacked the drama of Peter Parker removing his Spiderman mask, but her secret revealed her true heroism nonetheless.

Arrested For Driving While Black

On my way home from a sunny and relaxing Spring Break in Florida, I drove through the heart of Alabama and couldn't help but think of the history that this state holds. Upon entering the state of Alabama, one is presented with a giant billboard emblazoned with the face of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. It serves as a remembrance of the Civil Rights movement of the mid-1960's and those leaders who fought so valiantly to precipitate change. With the prevalent media coverage of racial dissension in my home city of Cincinnati, I couldn't help but ponder whether things had really changed so much in the intervening three decades.

In October of 1997, Shawn Lee, an African-American man was pulled over by a police officer in San Diego, California. Lee and his girlfriend were ordered out of their vehicle. They were then handcuffed and detained for 30 minutes while their vehicle was searched on Interstate 15. The officer said that they had been stopped because their vehicle fit the description of one that had been stolen earlier in the evening. This was understandable except for the fact that the vehicle that Mr. Lee had been driving was a Jeep Cherokee while the vehicle stolen earlier in the evening was a Honda sedan ("Arrest Racism" 1).

Mr. Lee's story is not an uncommon one. Racial profiling by police in America has finally begun to get the attention that is needed in order to stop it in its tracks. Racial profiling is the act of signaling out and targeting individuals for offenses based solely on their minority group. In some cases, harassment isn't as far as it goes. In the December 1998 case of David Calvin James, the victim was jumped, pepper-sprayed and beaten violently by the police to the point where he permanently lost the use of his left arm. According to Mr. James' lawyer, "His only sin was that he was in a drug area, walking alone and he was black." David Calvin James did not even have a police record ("Arrest Racism" 3).

It is the coverage of these types of incidents that is finally exposing the issue of racial profiling, even though it has been a problem throughout the country since the days of the Jim Crow Laws and the Black Code that were established following the abolishment of slavery in the south. The United States Government has made racial profiling illegal but has failed to address and enforce the issue until recently. A Department of Justice resource guide states that "United States laws do not, and should not, permit race to be used as a basis for stopping and searching individuals" (Ramirez 11). President George W. Bush has stated his view on the issue by stating that, "Racial profiling is wrong and we will end it in America" (MacDonald 1). It is now time that we address the issue ourselves. It is time to show that we understand that racial profiling by police is a discriminatory practice that has no factual evidence verifying its need or legitimacy.

Many individuals throughout the country believe in the need for racial profiling by police in order to keep crime low; however, statistics prove this belief to be unfounded. According to social psychologist John Lamberth, the percentage of illegal substances found at Maryland police stops was equal for both Whites and African-Americans. Mr. Lamberth states, "The probability of finding contraband was the same for Blacks and Whites" (2). Therefore, minority groups are unfairly being stopped and targeted. According to the US Department of Justice, "Disproportionate minority arrests for drug possession and distribution have fueled perceptions by police and others that race is an appropriate factor in the decision to stop or search and individual. [...] Police officers who aggressively and disproportionately search people of color will arrest more people of color than White [people], not because of differences in

behavior, but because they are stopping and searching many more people of color than Whites” (11).

Pro-racial profiling activist, Heather MacDonald disagrees. She states, “There’s no credible evidence that racial profiling exists” (1). According to a 1997 study done in Philadelphia, for the week of March 7th, 79% of car stops in which the race of the suspect was known, the suspects were African-Americans. However, according to the 1995 Census, African-Americans make up only 42% of the population of Philadelphia while Whites make up 54% (Sims 1). Nationwide, blacks account for more than 70% of the nation’s traffic stops while making up only 20% of the population (“Arrest Racism” 1). These statistics, however, do not prove that the stops were caused by racial profiling and therefore leave open the possibility that maybe African-Americans are actually causing all of these stops due to violations of the law. However, according to a New York study, the attorney general found that “12.6% of Whites stopped were arrested, compared to only 10.5% of Blacks and 11.3% of Latinos” (Ramirez 10). This means that while a much larger percentage of African-Americans were stopped, they actually committed a smaller percentage of infractions.

Now that we have addressed the fact that there is problem, the question is, is it too late to fix it? By denying the issue for so long, it has become too large for any one person to try to fix; consequently, the only way to try to end racial profiling is by working together. Our communities need to take a stand against racial profiling and show that we will fight it as a solid and united front. The only way to defeat this discriminatory practice is by working together. It is now time that a stand is taken so that we are the last generation that needs to endure the police practice of racial profiling.

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THE DENMARK GAZETTE

Thursday, November 15th

A Verdict Reached In King’s Murder Trial Jury makes decision in second case of historic trial

By Michael Koebel
The Associated Press

DENMARK, Eng. – After a month of deliberation, the jury in the second case against King Claudius of Denmark has finally reached a verdict. King Claudius was faced with two separate cases for the deaths of eight members of his court, including his brother, wife, stepson and councilor. He has been tried separately for the two counts of first-degree murder and the six counts of manslaughter that were brought against him. Claudius himself had suffered life-threatening injuries at the scene of the crime but due to the quick response by local medical personnel, he was able to be saved and be put on trial.

These cases have gained national attention due to the positions held by both the defendant and the deceased.

Earlier this month a jury decided in the first case against King Claudius ruling, that he was indeed guilty for both counts of first-degree murder for the planned killings of his brother, the former King of Denmark, and his stepson, Hamlet. The prosecution credits their lopsided victory to testimony of family friend, Horatio.

“Horatio’s testimony is the reason that we were able to prove that King Claudius was indeed guilty of not only of killing his brother and stepson, but also premeditating the murders.”

Horatio’s testimony had been based upon his first hand account of several key events. Horatio took the stand before the filled courtroom and

told of Hamlet’s plan to prove that Claudius had in fact been the killer of his father. Horatio told how Hamlet had manipulated the play so that the actors would act out the murder of King Hamlet. The play depicted a man poisoning his brother by pouring a deadly poison into his ear while he was asleep. Officials close to the investigation have confirmed that this was in fact how the murder of King Hamlet took place. Horatio then explained how Hamlet and he had watched Claudius to see if his reaction to witnessing the on stage murder would show his guilt. Horatio then said, after some prompting by the prosecution, that he believed Claudius was guilty after seeing his reaction. The defense claimed that his testimony was purely the opinion of Horatio and the jury dismissed it.

Horatio then took the stand the following day to tell the jury of several important conversations he had with Hamlet prior to his murder. It was these conversations that the prosecution credits the guilt verdict. Horatio told of how, following the play, Hamlet had told him that he had followed King Claudius up to the chapel and had overheard him confess to the murder of King Hamlet. The described confession was enough for the jury to rule that King Claudius should be charged with first-degree murder for the murder of his brother.



King Claudius of Denmark seen here at a March play put on by Elsinore actors.

“Hamlet told me that he had overheard King Claudius confess to the murder of King Hamlet while praying.”

—Horatio in his testimony against King Claudius

The prosecution then turned to the second murder charge, for the death of Hamlet. Horatio was once again brought to the stand to testify against King Claudius. Horatio went on to tell of another conversation during which Hamlet had told him about how Claudius had planned Hamlet's murder by having him tricked into being sent to England.

Horatio said that two gentleman, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, had been paid by King Claudius to take Hamlet to England to be executed. Horatio explained to the jury that Hamlet had found the letter and was able to escape while the two men were executed in his place.

The prosecution stated that, "the sole aim of Claudius was Hamlet's death, and when one plan failed,—that of sending Hamlet to England to be put of death,—being a man of resource, another was soon devised, his new plan being a fencing match between Hamlet and Laertes."

At this point in the trial, the prosecution presented their first piece of evidence, the sword used to kill many of the individuals in this case. An expert then was brought in to explain that the poison put on the edge of the sword by King Claudius was lethal enough to kill a person if a small drop got into a paper cut. The expert then stated that, based upon the amount of poison found on the sword, Claudius had the intention of killing Hamlet. Based upon this evidence, the jury decided that because King Claudius had premeditated and planned the murder of Hamlet, he should be found guilty of first degree murder even though the circumstances of the murder did not go as he had planned.

KING ALSO GUILTY OF MANSLAUGHTER, JURY SAYS

When the second case began, the prosecution felt that it would be a much more difficult case for them to win due to the lack of hard evidence. The defense, however, felt very confident and felt that they had done all of the preparations needed in order to win this case. After a brief weekend recess, the twelve-person jury went

back to work, this time to decide whether or not the defendant could be held responsible for the six counts of manslaughter. The defense claimed that the "tragic events in Denmark are accredited to actions and inactions of Hamlet, and; therefore King Claudius could not and should not be held responsible for the deaths of his wife Gertrude, councilor Polonius and Polonius' children, Laertes and lady Ophelia, and for the deaths of family friends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern that occurred in early February."

The trial opened with the prosecution introducing a new witness, an executioner from England. He had been put on the stand because he had been the one who executed Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. The man brought with him a key piece of evidence, a letter stating that King Claudius of Denmark had ordered that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern be killed. However, under further scrutiny, it could be seen that the names on the letter had been changed and the letter had originally been written for the execution of Prince Hamlet. King Hamlet was able to alter the letter and put the royal seal on it because he also had access to the seal. The executioner testified that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern yelled on numerous occasions that it was a mistake and they had been set up. However, this was not uncommon so the executioner thought nothing of it and did not believe the men when they said they were purely the pawns of the King. The prosecution was able to prove to the jury from this testimony that if it wasn't for Claudius's attempts to wrongfully kill Hamlet, these two men never would have died.

Moving to the next charge, the prosecution felt that the death of Ophelia would be a much more difficult one to prove that Claudius was responsible for. Since it was a suicide, the defense felt that they had a much stronger argument and could prove that it was Ophelia's mental instability that caused her to die and not Claudius. However, once again the prosecution had an answer, and they once

again called upon Horatio, their star witness, in order to prove their case. Horatio had been brought to the stand to prove one thing—what caused Ophelia to go insane. If the prosecution could prove that it was Claudius’s actions that caused Ophelia to go insane, he could be held responsible for her death as well. Horatio went to the stand and explained how she had gone crazy due to the death of her father and the notion that Hamlet had been killed in England. He testified that she had been of perfect mental health prior to any actions by Claudius. This was enough for the prosecution because they felt they could prove his guilt for the death of Ophelia through their closing argument.

Following the trial, an interview was set up with one of the twelve jurors in order to get a better understanding of why they voted the way they did. Juror number seven is a local gravedigger here in Denmark and had been named the jury foreman for this trial.

We sat down with the juror, whose name is to remain anonymous, and asked him why he felt that Claudius was guilty for the deaths of Queen Gertrude, Polonius, and Laertes.

“The answer to your question is very simple. He put them in harms way. He provided the poison that Queen Gertrude drank and the sword that was used to kill Laertes. If it hadn’t been for Claudius’s plotting to kill Hamlet, none of this would have happened. Hamlet never would have stabbed Polonius if he had had no reason to kill Claudius. Like I said, it is very simple. Claudius’s plan backfired and all these people are the victims of that backfire. The prosecution summed up this case perfectly. Claudius was the pebble.”

The prosecution ended this case in a very dramatic fashion. Their closing argument put the nail in the coffin for this case and ended any doubt for the jury about how they should vote. The prosecution compared these six deaths to the ripples of a pond. When a pebble is thrown into a pond, it makes many ripples. Yet, it is that one pebble that caused the first ripple and it is responsible for all the other ripples that may occur. The prosecution claimed that Claudius

was that pebble, and while he may not have been the one to directly cause the deaths, it was his original actions and intent that indirectly caused them to die. He should be held responsible for all that is caused by what he began.

The outcome of this trial was not a surprising one. The prosecution had this trial in hand the whole time by having every aspect of the trial covered. Yesterday afternoon, King Claudius of Denmark was stripped of his title and charged with all six counts of manslaughter. The jury decided that it was not enough that he get the life in prison that he had been given for the first-degree murder charges and decided to sentence him to death. King Claudius will face a death by hanging on May 12th of next year. The prosecution says that the outcome of this trial is “sweet justice and what Claudius deserved.”

2004 SCORING GUIDE FOR PORTFOLIOS

A portfolio consists of four equally important pieces of prose writing. Each portfolio is read holistically by at least two English instructors; each gives a single comprehensive score on a six-point scale (“6” is high; “1” is low). What follows are two lists: one highlights characteristics of effective portfolios; the other offers a more specific scoring scale used by readers. In determining a single score, readers assess the quality of a portfolio as a whole and do not average the four pieces.

CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE PORTFOLIOS

The following list, in no particular order, represents some of the features of effective student writing most often mentioned as being essential or desirable qualities by the committee in charge of evaluating the 2004 incoming portfolios:

- ▲ Develops pieces fully and substantially
- ▲ Uses language effectively and appropriately.
- ▲ Demonstrates ability to write in multiple genres.
- ▲ Shows when appropriate by creating scenes, using dialogue and interior monologue when appropriate.
- ▲ Supports assertions and generalizations with evidence, examples, and details.
- ▲ Recognizes complexities in issues and positions.
- ▲ Explores larger social or cultural aspects.
- ▲ Demonstrates an awareness of audience.
- ▲ Writes with purpose, consistency, and focus.
- ▲ Engages readers: pieces are at least occasionally moving, powerful or imaginative.
- ▲ Demonstrates awareness of global/local organization appropriate for the writing task.

SCORING SCALE

Your portfolio will be scored by readers using the following scale:

UPPER RANGE PORTFOLIOS

6 range: Excellent portfolios. These portfolios' many significant strengths outweigh their weaknesses. **Excellent** portfolios encompass the characteristics of **very good** (5-range) portfolios but also display other strengths. They convincingly demonstrate the writer's ability to handle multiple genres successfully, and the writing is substantially developed, often moving beyond the predictable and clichéd in approach, style, or subject matter.

5 range: Very Good portfolios. These portfolios' strengths clearly outweigh their weaknesses. **Very good** portfolios show an awareness of audience, and show substantial development of ideas often by integrating evidence, examples, and details to support assertions and generalizations. **Very good** portfolios successfully demonstrate the writer's ability to handle multiple genres.

MIDDLE RANGE PORTFOLIOS

4 range: Good portfolios. These portfolios' strengths outweigh their weaknesses. **Good** portfolios articulate a purpose and provide moments of sustained exploration of a question through the use of evidence. Compared to **competent** portfolios (3-range), **good** portfolios (4-range) demonstrate more awareness of global/local organization appropriate for the writing task and more consistent evidence of the writer's ability to handle multiple genres.

3 range: Competent portfolios. These portfolios' strengths and weaknesses are about evenly balanced. **Competent** portfolios demonstrate some awareness of global/local organization appropriate for the writing task. Evidence of the writer's ability to handle multiple genres is uneven. Some pieces may be too brief, underdeveloped, general or predictable, but the language use is generally competent. **Competent** portfolios (3-range), unlike lower range portfolios, show some awareness of audience.

LOWER RANGE PORTFOLIOS

2 range: Fair portfolios. These portfolios' weaknesses outweigh their strengths. There is little evidence of the writer's ability to handle multiple genres successfully. **Fair** portfolios are usually thin in substance and undistinguished in style although they may be clear and error free.

1 range: Poor portfolios. These portfolios' many weaknesses clearly outweigh their strengths. **Poor** portfolios may lack development and/or evidence of effective global and local organization. **Poor** portfolios may have substantial grammatical errors that impede reading. Focus may be unstated and/or unclear.

GUIDELINES FOR USING NON-SEXIST LANGUAGE

Language not only reflects the world around us but also conditions or shapes people's thoughts and attitudes. In other words, when we write or speak, we're actually doing things to our audience—pleasing them, amusing them, informing them, or perhaps hurting them—not simply expressing our thoughts. The fact that words can harm readers demands that we, as writers, be responsible for what we say and how we say things. Realizing this, most of us have already rid our vocabularies of offensive language that labels people on the basis of race, ethnic origin, and sexual orientation—words we know are painful. But our language still contains conventions that in more subtle ways can be as hurtful as those obviously vulgar words.

This is particularly true in the area of gender, where we can do harm without even realizing it. For instance, if we use the pronouns he, his, or him to stand for both men and women, if we use man to stand for all human beings, or if we label people as mailmen or chairmen regardless of their gender, we are making an unfair and harmful distinction. By not being aware that even seemingly insignificant parts of our language like the use of pronouns have social implications, we trivialize and make irrelevant the existence and contributions of half of humanity. In an age when roles are changing rapidly, when women are becoming doctors, scientists, farmers, and athletes, and when men work as elementary school teachers, nurses, and secretaries, we need to make sure that we neither intentionally nor unintentionally exclude anyone with our language. Eliminating sexist language may not eliminate biased conduct, but it can create greater possibilities for women and men to share equally active and caring roles in our society.

Thus we consider it inappropriate to use sexist language in papers written for the composition classes. In this policy, the English Department is following the guidelines used in all Miami University publications, as well as in professional journals in most academic fields. Organizations such as the National Council of Teachers of English, and the Modern Language Association have required the use of non-sexist language in their publications for more than a decade.

Here are some ways you can avoid accidentally transmitting sexually-biased messages along with the messages you mean to send.

I. Avoid the pronoun problem by using plurals in sentences.

Example: Give each student his paper as soon as he asks for it.

Alternative: Give students their papers as soon as they ask for them.

Example: Anyone who wants to eat dinner should wash his hands.

Alternative: All who want to eat dinner should wash their hands.

II. Eliminate words which cause unnecessary gender problems.

Example: A nurse must take care of her patients.

Alternative: A nurse must take care of patients.

Example: Every person has a right to ask his question and to voice his opinion.

Alternative: Every person has a right to ask questions and voice opinions.

III. Use inclusive nouns.

Example: mankind

Alternative: people, humanity, human beings, humankind

Example: chairman presiding

Alternative: coordinator, moderator, officer, head, chair, chairperson

Examples: businessman, fireman, mailman

Alternatives: business executive, fire fighter, mail carrier

IV. Use alternatives to phrases which demean or stereotype women.

Examples: lady lawyer, woman doctor, career girl, lady, authoress, poetess

Alternatives: lawyer, doctor, professional, woman, author, poet

Example: Have your mother send cookies for the field trip.

Alternative: Have your parents send cookies for the field trip.

Example: While lunch was delayed, the ladies chattered about last night's meeting.

Alternative: While lunch was delayed, the women talked about last night's meeting.

ADVICE FROM PORTFOLIO SCORERS

Each year, portfolio readers at Miami read hundreds of portfolios. And each year at the end of the scoring sessions, we ask those readers to evaluate their responses to the portfolios they have read and to offer advice to students who are compiling portfolios in hopes of receiving credit from Miami University. What follows here is a summary of the evaluators' remarks and thoughts from the last two years.

Your Audience

Evaluators this year follow previous evaluators in indicating that a clear aim and sense of audience are the two most important features of a successful portfolio. In fact, the majority of remarks from instructors this year emphasize that while students need to show mature and insightful thinking and writing, they should also present themselves naturally, not artificially. Evaluators suggest that students should not be afraid to use "I," and that "their own voice(s) and opinions should not be drowned by research." We have recommended in the past, and we continue to encourage you to "write as yourself," not as the student you think college professors want you to be. We look for evidence that you think about how you fit into the world, about how issues you write about relate to your personal situations (social, racial, gendered, economic, regional, religious, etc.).

Instructors suggest repeatedly:

"Consider your audience. We're real people who can see through stereotypical and clichéd arguments. We appreciate critical thinking and self-awareness in each piece, not just description."

Raters are interested in what you think and see and how you see those things in relation to broader issues and concerns. Evaluators tell students to "think about how the pieces you write connect, and talk about them as a whole, not just as random pieces." Also, "think seriously about ambiguities, feelings, and problems. Revise, rewrite and show that you are thinking about your audience."

The readers at Miami are diverse in age, teaching experience, interests, and tastes. While readers range from experienced graduate students to tenured professors, they are all interested in students and spend quite a bit of time reading and evaluating college writing.

Before completing your portfolio, you should spend time reading your work with the scoring criteria in mind. While the portfolio committee makes changes from year to year, the major criteria remain the same, and your readers will be using them as their guide.

SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS FROM PORTFOLIO SCORERS

While you should keep audience and aim in mind as you develop your portfolio, you will benefit as well from more specific advice and suggestions our raters offer below.

- 1. The importance of the reflective letter:** The most common pieces of advice our raters suggest concern the reflective letter. This initial piece is obviously an important part of the portfolio, much more than just a basic, impersonal cover letter. Part of what we mean when we say “reflective” is that we want you to situate yourself for your readers—in terms of how you perceive your own writing, and, most importantly, why you perceive it the way you do. One rater insists, “Give much more attention to the reflective letter. It should be REFLECTIVE (many were not) and interesting,” and “go beyond simple summary of what is in the collection. Reflect on how the pieces reveal something about you as a writer and how they are connected.” The reflective letter sets the tone for the whole portfolio and creates a first and lasting impression. Think about what reflection involves—not just including details about who you are and how you write but also about how and why your background and environment have affected what you write. Many successful letters strike a balance between confidence and humility; many show awareness of strengths and limitations, as well as awareness that writing has consequences (beyond getting credit for English at Miami).
- 2. Use the full 12-page allotment:** We strongly urge you to take full advantage of the 12-page limit and develop your pieces fully. All raters notice whether or not a student’s portfolio has enough “substance.” With this in mind, we ask that students use the page limit and make it work. Portfolios that are five or six pages long are not fully developed, and do not demonstrate fully your talent as a writer. Longer portfolios offer analysis and discuss the complexity of issues. Brief portfolios rarely get a high score because they can’t fully develop, support, and sustain a writer’s position.
- 3. Develop with specific detail:** Use many details, examples, and illustrations to develop and explain your points. Instructors prefer concreteness to vagueness and showing to telling. When appropriate, use dialogue and narrative examples and scenes to help develop your work. As one rater suggests, “Look at a lot of examples in Best of Miami Portfolios and try to figure out why they are good pieces. Usually, it’s not because of the topic but because of how the writer develops the topic.”
- 4. Content and style should suit audience and aim:** Be aware of “big issue” topics and make sure you can take them on in a way that is focused and thoughtful. A reader is less likely to be enthusiastic about the 26th paper on abortion or *Hamlet* unless it has a fresh angle. Also, when using outside sources, work from your own viewpoint instead of simply retelling other peoples’ ideas. If you use outside sources, be sure to include a Works Cited page, so readers know that you know how to give appropriate credit to other writers when you use their ideas.

5. **Be creative: Don't be afraid to experiment.** Include pieces in a variety of styles if possible. Raters say, “forget formulas” emphasizing that “a good five-paragraph theme has no greater chance than a good paper with any other structure... Life is too short to cram into five paragraphs!” Several raters have mentioned that they want a writer to “take chances, use humor—show different sides of yourself! Take time to ask yourself: ‘How can I take this more interesting? More engaging?’ and then take time to revise. No one wants to be bored.” If you do decide to be creative and take some risks with your writing, it would be a good idea to explain such aspects of your writing in your cover letter.
6. **Revise your portfolio carefully:** Most professional writers see revision as going well beyond changing words and correcting grammar. Give yourself plenty of time to spend reading and re-reading your work, thinking of ways to offer fresher examples and more compelling arguments. Revising also means considering your audience: “Go over your pieces and ‘re-see’ them for this audience and situation.”
7. **Appearance and correctness count:** Of course content is most important, but after taking the time to do the writing, you need to spend time polishing and correcting the work. Use spell check and get a trusted person to proofread. Give pieces titles, number pages, and use a legible, plain typeface or font (we recommend Times New Roman). Full portfolios in italics or long narrow fonts are difficult to read, and anything smaller than 10 pt. is also extremely hard to read. Remember: use a readable point size: 12 pt. (depending on the font) is best. Double-spacing is standard, as are one-inch margins on all sides of the page.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Can I send one single paper that fulfills the requirements of a narrative or short story, an explanatory/exploratory/persuasive essay and a response to a text?

Yes. Some teachers assign writing to students that is “multi-genre” and that fulfills many of the expectations we have of the separate pieces we ask you to submit. If you have such a “multi-genre” paper, it must be substantial enough to fulfill all the content requirements for the portfolio.

If you choose to submit a multi-genre paper in place of separate papers, we ask the following:

- ▲ Explain your choice in your reflective letter. Tell us what specific required genres your paper fulfills, making sure to follow the instructions for the letter (found in the brochure) asking you to reflect critically on your choices for the portfolio as well as on the purpose and audience for your multi-genre paper, as you would for any other papers you submit in your portfolio.
- ▲ Make certain to follow appropriate in-text and bibliographic procedures for all the papers you submit in your portfolio in which you use others’ ideas or refer to outside sources.
- ▲ Be sure to follow the “essential instructions” listed in the brochure for both portfolios (such as including drafts for both portfolios, removing all identifying information, staying within page number limits, etc.).

What exactly does the brochure instruction to “properly document” sources mean? Do bibliographic pages count in my page number limit?

To properly document your use of someone else’s words or ideas, you must both cite your source in your paper, at the end of each quotation or paraphrase you take from a source, and provide full bibliographic documentation in a separate page at the end of each paper in which you use other sources. To be consistent in your documentation, you will need to follow one specific citation style—such as MLA, APA, or Chicago—throughout each paper. English departments typically use MLA style, but you can use other styles, as long as you do so consistently. Requirements for each of the styles listed above can be found online, or in individual style manuals or general writing manuals (such as Diana Hacker’s A Writer’s Reference) available in most retail bookstores or college textbook stores.

Bibliographic pages do NOT count in the 12-page limit for the portfolio. For example, if your portfolio ends up being 14 or 15 pages long because of your end-page documentation, but the actual text of the papers you submit totals 12 pages or less, then your portfolio falls within the maximum page limit. Do not leave out the bibliographic pages because they put your portfolio over 12 pages.

What’s the difference between a “traditional” reflective letter and a “creative” one?

A “traditional” reflective letter usually takes the form of a personal letter of introduction, which is structured as a typical formal letter: it opens with a greeting; moves to a brief introduction of yourself as writer; offers reflective information about each of the works included (i.e. it provides a context for each work and explains why you included it in the portfolio); and then closes with some concluding remarks about yourself or your portfolio. For many students, the traditional reflective letter form is a good choice. However, some writers choose to open up this traditional kind of letter, to include conventions from other writing genres. For example, one writer might choose to submit a letter that includes dialogue, creates

a detailed scene, or incorporates figurative language as a means of introduction or reflection. Another writer might choose to cite outside sources—like interesting quotes from plays, poems, or works of fiction, or the writer’s own writing—to fulfill the requirements for the reflective letter. That is, the genre of reflective letter writing is able to accommodate a variety of creative options that you can select from or combine. Since the letter is the first piece of writing included in the portfolio, you will do well to consider all of the options available to you—and try drafting out various ones to see how they might look to and be received by the portfolio audience—as you set out to write your reflective letter.

Whether you select the traditional or creative letter, or try a combination of both, be sure you maintain a focus on your portfolio writing.

How important are titles to the portfolio contents?

Titles are often a very difficult and sometimes overlooked part of the composing process. However, the title is the first introduction to a piece of writing that readers see, and as such it is an important element of the work itself. Spend some time thinking about how you will title the three works in your portfolio that require titles (all but the reflective letter). For each title you create, ask yourself: Will this title intrigue my readers? Does it reflect what I have written in my paper? If I saw this title on a paper, would I want to read the rest of the paper based on the title alone? You could also get feedback from other people, asking them the same kinds of questions. Following this procedure can help you determine if you have chosen an interesting title that will effectively prepare the audience for reading your text.

Does all of the writing included in my portfolio have to be related in some way?

Another way to put this question is, do I need a “theme” that connects all four of my works? And the answer to that question is no. You do not have to feel “locked in” to selecting or creating pieces that are all somehow “related” to each other. On the other hand, your reflective letter is meant to explain to your readers how you chose the individual pieces you included in the portfolio, and why they work well together to showcase your writing strengths and give your portfolio varied depth and balance. That is, the most successful portfolios demonstrate an ability to write effectively in different genres of writing. The portfolio readers will be looking for your ability to compose in a variety of ways: reflection on specific texts you have written; narration of a personal experience or short story writing; exploration, explanation, and/or persuasion; and response to other texts.

Do all 4 pieces in my portfolio have to be of equal length?

The most important thing to remember is to use the full 12-page limit and develop your thoughts in each piece as fully as possible. You don’t need to force each paper you include to be of equal length. Chances are that your reflective letter will only be 1-2 pages in length, while your explanatory/exploratory/persuasive essay or your response to a text will likely be much longer, maybe even 5 or 6 full pages. One of your pieces may be 3 ¼ pages, while another may be 4 ½; instead of being credited in that case for 4 pages and 5 pages respectively—which might put you over the limit—we would count the fractional pages together as one page, which would either give you one more page to work with, or maybe keep you within the 12-page limit. In other words, use the 12 pages in a way that helps you produce 4 pieces that you are happy with and that, taken together, will showcase your writing abilities most effectively. Your portfolio readers will be reading and evaluating your portfolio as a whole.

PORTFOLIO CONTENTS

A portfolio consists of a completed information form together with the following four equally important pieces of prose writing. Miami's Department of English follows the NCTE Guidelines for Nonsexist Use of Language, and any sources used must be properly documented with in-text and end page citation. Examples and explanation of both the use of nonsexist language and proper documentation can be found on the Miami English Department's Portfolio Website <http://www.muohio.edu/portfolio/>.

Reflective Letter

The reflective letter, addressed to Miami University writing teachers, sets the tone for the portfolio by introducing both the writer and the individual pieces. Readers are not expecting a narrative of your experiences and growth as a writer but, rather, evidence of the critical reflection used in assembling and producing the portfolio. To that end, most useful letters explicitly introduce the pieces and explain the purpose and audience for each piece. Both creative and more traditional letters of introduction are acceptable.

Narrative or Short Story

This piece can be based on personal experience as a non-fiction narrative or can be a short work of fiction. Its aim is to communicate the significance of an experience or event through description, dialogue, and/or narration. Put another way, successful pieces show rather than tell. The writing can be personal and informal. This narrative or short story should have a title.

Explanatory, Exploratory, or Persuasive Essay

Generally speaking, essays in this category should be focused, informative treatments of specific subjects. This essay should provide much more than convincing examples of supporting data; it should examine multiple points of view and show strong evidence of critical thinking, awareness of audience, and attention to social context. If secondary sources are used, they must be documented correctly. This explanatory, exploratory, or persuasive essay should have a title. You may find that you've written an essay which fits this category for a class other than English.

Response to a Text

This essay should respond to a written text (short story, novel, poem, play, or essay) or a cultural text (film, music, or visual art) produced by professionals, classmates, or yourself. The response should interpret or evaluate all or part of a text. Possible approaches include analyzing textual elements, explaining the text's significance, comparing the text to other texts, relating the text to personal experience and/or connecting it to larger social or cultural contexts. Use support from the text to develop ideas and strengthen focus without overshadowing your own response or giving extensive summaries. If secondary sources are used, they must be documented correctly. (If the print text is not common, a copy of it should be included with your portfolio.) This response to a text should have a title.

ESSENTIAL INSTRUCTIONS

- ◆ Papers written in class or out of school, including college application essays, are acceptable. Papers may be revised after being returned by a teacher.
- ◆ Miami's Department of English follows the NCTE Guidelines for Nonsexist Use of Language and any sources used must be properly documented. For explanations of both nonsexist language and proper documentation, see the portfolio website at <http://www.muohio.edu/portfolio/> or The Best of Miami University's Portfolios.
- ◆ Arrange your portfolio in this order:
 - completed information form
 - reflective letter
 - narrative or short story
 - explanatory, exploratory, or persuasive essay
 - response to a text
- ◆ For any one piece of writing (not all four pieces), include and label all draft material and paperclip it to the end of the appropriate essay. Portfolios lacking draft material will not be scored. (Note cards will not be accepted.)
- ◆ Your name should not appear anywhere in your portfolio—including your reflective letter. All your writing—except your draft materials—must be free of teachers' marks, grades, and comments.
- ◆ Do not staple or bind your portfolio. Paper clips are okay.
- ◆ Your completed portfolio, not counting works cited pages and draft material, should not exceed 12 typed, double-spaced full pages (8.5"x11") using a 12-point font. Portfolios over 12 pages will not be read, but the strongest portfolios tend to be 10 to 12 pages long.
- ◆ Submissions are accepted anytime between January 1 and July 8. You will receive results by mail within three weeks. Results will not be given by phone.
- ◆ The portfolio submission fee is \$28, more if you earn credit, and you will receive a \$10 gift certificate from an Oxford area bookstore. You will be billed later so do not send payment with your portfolio.

Submit anytime between February 1 and June 20, 2005:

**PORTFOLIO WRITING PROGRAM
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
MIAMI UNIVERSITY
OXFORD, OHIO 45056**

PORTFOLIO INFORMATION FORM

TO THE STUDENT: Complete the first half of this form (type or print) and give it to your senior teacher to sign. Mail it together with your four-piece portfolio in a 10x13 envelope addressed to: Portfolio Writing Program, Department of English, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio 45056. Submit anytime between January 1 and July 8, 2004. Do not send payment.

STUDENT'S NAME _____
HOME ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____
HOME PHONE (____) _____ EMAIL _____

Will you be: (*check one*)

- an entering first-year student
- a transfer student
- an upper-division Miami student
- other

At what campus will you enroll:

- Hamilton
- Middletown
- Oxford

All the writing included in the attached portfolio is my own, and I grant Miami University permission to publish all or part of its contents.

Signature of Student _____

TO THE TEACHER: If you believe this portfolio contains only the student's own work, please complete this form. Thank you!

SUPERVISING TEACHER'S NAME _____
TEACHER'S HOME PHONE (____) _____
TEACHER'S HOME ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____
NAME OF HIGH SCHOOL _____
SCHOOL ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____
PHONE (____) _____
EMAIL _____

To the best of my knowledge, the attached portfolio has been written by this student.

SIGNATURE OF TEACHER _____

SUPERVISING TEACHERS 2004

Stella B. Allen	Greenhills School	Ann Arbor, MI
Faith Anderson	Ballard High School	Louisville, KY
Kathleen M. Anderson	Beavercreek High School	Dayton, OH
Anna D. Arapakos	Farragut High School	Knoxville, TN
Elizabeth Armstrong	Hathaway Brown School	Shaker Heights, OH
Ryan L. Arnold	Washburn Rural High School	Topeka, KS
Jason Auvdel	Rutherford B. Hayes High School	Delaware, OH
Anna Avery	Hamilton Southeastern High School	Fishers, IN
Bradley P. Anderson	Lyons Township High School	LaGrange, IL
Jim Barnabee	Adlai E. Stevenson High School	Lincolnshire, IL
Kathryn Shelley Barnes	Traverse City Central High School	Traverse City, MI
Michelle M. Barron	Cincinnati Hills Christian Academy	Cincinnati, OH
Kathleen Bartlett	Midpark High School	Cleveland, OH
Mary Lou Beal	Clear Fork Valley High School	Bellville, OH
Matt Blachall	Glenbrook North High School	Northbrook, IL
Mrs. Janet Black	North Royalton High School	North Royalton, OH
Leigh Block	The Walker School	Marietta, GA
Scott A. Bodnar	Marian Catholic High School	Chicago Heights, IL
Melissa Brandewie	Lehman Catholic High School	Sidney, OH
Robin Brenneman	Hilliard Davidson High School	Hilliard, OH
Kevin R. Brewer	William Fremd High School	Palatine, IL
Traci Brewer	Fairborn High School	Fairborn, OH
Cynthia K. Briggs	Wyoming High School	Cincinnati, OH
Darrin D. Broadway	Ottawa Hills High School	Toledo, OH
Anne Broderick	Blessed Trinity High School	Roswell, GA
Mrs. Megan Bruno	Walsh Jesuit High School	Stow, OH
Kathleen Carthey	Eagan High School	Saint Paul, MN
Antonio S. Caruso	North Allegheny High School	Wexford, PA
Cathleen M. Case	Highland Park High School	Highland Park, IL
Elizabeth Cecilia	Upper St. Clair High School	Pittsburgh, PA
Regina M. Chambers	New Richmond High School	New Richmond, OH
Laura A. Clayton	Wadsworth High School	Wadsworth, OH
Timothy J. Clutter	Anderson High School	Cincinnati, OH
George Coates	William Mason High School	Mason, OH
Timothy S. Coleman	Palos Verdes Peninsula High School	Rolling Hills E., CA
Sue Collesano	duPont Manual High School	Louisville, KY
Valerie Combs	Archbishop McNicholas High School	Cincinnati, OH
Sean Cooke	Worthington Kilbourne High School	Columbus, OH
Mrs. Debbie Corpus	Oakwood High School	Dayton, OH
Mark Covell	Poland High School	Youngstown, OH
Mary Beth Cox	New Trier Township High School	Winnetka, IL
Betsy Cussler	Edina West High School	Minneapolis, MN
Melissa Czuprenski	L'Anse Creuse High School	Harrison Tsp, MI
Katharine E. Dougherty	Ridgefield High School	Ridgefield, CT
Patrick C. Doyle	Benet Academy	Lisle, IL

Mrs. Patricia L. Drake	Centerville High School	Dayton, OH
Debra J. Drew	Perrysburg High School	Perrysburg, OH
Robert A. Dvorak	St. Francis DeSales High School	Columbus, OH
Janet Elfers	Mariemont High School	Cincinnati, OH
Bridget Elias	Avon Lake High School	Avon Lake, OH
Mrs. Priscilla F. Elshire	Wapakoneta Senior High School	Wapakoneta, OH
Andy M. Ey	Archbishop McNicholas High School	Cincinnati, OH
Michael T. Feely	Marquette University High School	Milwaukee, WI
Deborah A. Feeney	Tinora High School	Defiance, OH
Kenneth J. Ferris	Cincinnati Hills Christian Academy	Cincinnati, OH
Scott R. Filkins	Centennial High School	Champaign, IL
Laura A. Fitch	Solon High School	Solon, OH
John T. Foley	North Shore Country Day School	Winnetka, IL
Pete Follansbee	Collegiate School	Richmond, VA
Matthew J. Foster	Little Rock Central High School	Little Rock, AR
Stephanie Frank	Parkersburg Catholic High School	Parkersburg, WV
Ms. R. Freeman	Okemos High School	Okemos, MI
William F. Fritz, Jr.	Adlai E. Stevenson High School	Lincolnshire, IL
Jennifer Gady	Apponequet Regional High School	Lakeville, MA
Laura A. Gallaher	Notre Dame Academy	Toledo, OH
Lori A. Genovesi	Conneaut Lake High School	Conneaut Lake, PA
Dr. Alexander George	Marmion Academy	Aurora, IL
Patricia M. George	William Mason High School	Mason, OH
Mrs. Tracy Giles	Willoughby South High School	Willoughby
Elizabeth A. Glenn	Westerville North High School	Westerville, OH
Amy B. Goldsmith	Glenbrook North High School	Northbrook, IL
Martha Gorun	Libertyville High School	Libertyville, IL
Patricia J. Grabill	Lawrence Central High School	Indianapolis, IN
Tim Grandy	Divine Savior Holy Angels High School	Milwaukee, WI
Dr. Joy M. Gray	Kenston High School	Chagrin Falls, OH
Kara Haas	Aurora High School	Aurora, OH
Vincetta Haber	Boardman High School	Youngstown, OH
Mrs. Kathy Hall	Princeton High School	Cincinnati, OH
Barbara L. Hallman	Rocky River High School	Rocky River, OH
Donna J. Hammond	Madeira High School	Cincinnati, OH
Diane E. Hassinger	QSI International School of Bratislava	Bratislava 842 20
John (Jack) S. Hay	Boardman High School	Youngstown, OH
Linda M. Hegrat	Lake Catholic High School	Mentor, OH
Charles Herber	Jefferson High School	Lafayette, IN
Marilyn R. Herring	Ursuline Academy	Cincinnati, OH
Linda P. Hoffman	Gahanna Lincoln High School	Gahanna, OH
Sister M. Hoffman, OSF	St. Charles Preparatory School	Columbus, OH
Michael F. Hopkins	Parkway South High School	Ballwin, MO
Megan R. Horncastle	Lakota West High School	West Chester, OH
Cheryl A. Huffer	North Olmsted High School	North Olmsted, OH
Karen L. Hull	Big Walnut High School	Sunbury, OH

Ellen E. Isbell	Centerville High School	Dayton, OH
Shelley Jackson	North Central High School	Indianapolis, IN
Deborah C. Jados	Gahanna Lincoln High School	Gahanna, OH
Angela Johnson	Lakota East High School	Middletown, OH
Barbara Josson	Lakeside High School	Ashtabula, OH
Vara Prasad V. N. Joysula	Huron High School	Ann Arbor, MI
Roseann Julian	Talawanda High School	Oxford, OH
Kermit Kane	Benet Academy	Lisle, IL
Dr. Linda A. Karazim	Springfield Catholic School	Holland, OH
Kenneth C. Keener	Archbishop Moeller High School	Cincinnati, OH
Robert Kelber	Brooklyn High School	Cleveland, OH
Kathleen C. Kenny	Gilmour Academy	Gates Mills, OH
Cathy Kerkhove	Grandview High School	Aurora, CO
Judy Kessler	North Springs High School	Atlanta, GA
Douglas Kile	Marion Harding High School	Marion, OH
Ryan G. Kitsmiller	Gahanna Lincoln High School	Gahanna, OH
Carol L. Kohler	Hoover High School	North Canton, OH
Carol M. Kruger	Westerville South High School	Westerville, OH
Robert Kummer	Batavia High School	Batavia, IL
Rebecca Kupferberg	Findlay High School	Findlay, OH
Mrs. Genevieve Leeseemann	Little Miami High School	Morrow, OH
Mrs. Virginia S. Leis	Ottawa Glandorf High School	Ottawa, OH
Steve Little	Olentangy High School	Lewis Center, OH
John Lodle	Belleville West High School	Belleville, IL
Nicole M. Long	Ayersville High School	Defiance, OH
Carol Kirker Low	Pickerington High School	Pickerington, OH
Therese D. Lustic	Hudson High School	Hudson, OH
Mrs. Joan Lynch	Lycee Interntional High School	St. Germain, France
Dorelle B. Malucci	Indian Hill High School	Cincinnati, OH
Michael H. Marchal	St. Xavier High School	Cincinnati, OH
Zachary Marks	Thomas S. Wootton High School	Rockville, MD
Mary E. Marshall	Langley High School	McLean, VA
Diane Masar	B. Reed Henderson High School	West Chester, PA
Ilene C. Maslan	Brentwood High School	Brentwood, TN
Jeanette Mathern	Findlay High School	Findlay, OH
Diane P. McCartney	West Holmes High School	Millersburg, OH
Kevin McChesney	Pickerington High School	Pickerington, OH
Rebecca McFarlan	Indian Hill High School	Cincinnati, OH
Yvonne McVann	North Atlanta High School	Atlanta, GA
Sherry Medwin	New Trier Township High School	Winnetka, IL
Patricia A. Mellen	Sandusky High School	Sandusky, OH
Lisa M. Metcalf	Warren Township High School	Gurnee, IL
Penni J. Meyer	Kettering Fairmont High School	Dayton, OH
Leah Miller	Upper Arlington High School	Columbus, OH
Rita K. Minor	Conneaut High School	Conneaut, OH
Julie H. Moore	Larry A. Ryle High School	Union, KY

Thomas E. Mulhall	Brecksville-Broadview Heights High School	B-view Heights, OH
Steve Mumma	Wayzata High School	Minneapolis, MN
Julie K. Murphy	Perry High School	Massillon, OH
Brother Tom Murphy	Carmel High School	Mundelein, IL
Mrs. Jennifer Musgrave	Columbian High School	Tiffin, OH
Doris Nell	Lebanon High School	Lebanon, OH
Elizabeth Nelson	Springfield Shawnee High School	Springfield, OH
Linda Netzley	Milton-Union High School	West Milton, OH
Tiffany Nicol	Solon High School	Solon, OH
Ronda S. Noble	Kenston High School	Chagrin Falls, OH
Toni Marie O'Daniul	Convent of the Visitation School	Saint Paul, MN
Karen O'Neil	St. Anne's Belfield School	Charlottesville, VA
Chris Oetter	New Trier Township High School	Winnetka, IL
Sara Olding	Sidney High School	Sidney, OH
Geraldine Osborn	Patrick Henry High School	Hamler, OH
Kaine Osburn	Niles West High School	Skokie, IL
Charles W. Otte	Central Crossing High School	Grove City, OH
Ryan Owen	Glenbrook South High School	Glenview, IL
Antoinette M. Owens	Glenbrook South High School	Glenview, IL
Vicki L. Packard-Cooper	Northwestern High School	Springfield, OH
Rita J. Palmer	Hoover High School	North Canton, OH
Magen Panfil	Dublin Coffman High School	Dublin, OH
Dr. Simeha Pearl	The Weber School	Atlanta, GA
Scott Pharion	St. Charles Preparatory School	Columbus, OH
Daniel Seeberg	Loyola Academy	Wilmette, IL
Edward L. Poe	Lawrence Central High School	Indianapolis, IN
Elizabeth Poggiali	Sandusky High School	Sandusky, OH
David Pollard	Stephen T. Badin High School	Hamilton, OH
Emily K. Powers	Berea High School	Berea, OH
Cathy Ransenberg	Mariemont High School	Cincinnati, OH
Joan S. Ratajczak	Home Schooled	
David Reed-Nordwall	Seaholm High School	Birmingham, MI
Gregory V. Renneker	Stephen T. Badin High School	Hamilton, OH
Megan J. Repass	Sycamore High School	Cincinnati, OH
Brian P. Riley	St. Stephen's & St. Agnes School	Alexandria, VA
Dennis Rogers	Dublin Scioto High School	Dublin, OH
Fran Scerba	Strongsville High School	Strongsville, OH
Lisa Schingledecker	Olentangy High School	Lewis Center, OH
Virginia Schmidt	Home Schooled	
Leslie M. Schutz	Veritas Academy	Worthington, OH
Georgiale Scott	Cranbrook Kingswood High School	Bloomfield Hills, MI
Mike Sebestyen	Prospect High School	Mount Prospect, IL
Tom Shafer	West Carrollton High School	Dayton, OH
Geoffrey Sharpless	Park Tudor School	Indianapolis, IN
Mr. Kim C. Shepherd	Hilliard Davidson High School	Hilliard, OH
Jeffrey D. Simpson	Hamilton High School	Hamilton, OH

Iris F. Skoog	Nardin Academy	Buffalo, NY
Corinne Smith	Kings High School	Mason, OH
Michael G. Smith	Pickerington High School North	Pickerington, OH
Robert R. Smith	Glen Oak High School West Campus	Canton, OH
Virginia Smith	Home Schooled	
Sheri Somers	Johnstown-Monroe High School	Johnstown, OH
Clare E. Squance	Talawanda High School	Oxford, OH
Kelly J. Stauss	Sheboygan North High School	Sheboygan, WI
Richard A. Stevens	Perry High School	Perry, OH
Jennifer Stockslager	Dixie High School	New Lebanon, OH
Virginia R. Stoller	Ottawa Glandorf High School	Ottawa, OH
Nancy R. Strauch	Nordonia High School	Macedonia, OH
Stacey Swidzinski	Butler Senior High School	Butler, PA
Ashley L. Szymiski	Neuqua Valley High School	Naperville, IL
Linda N. Temple	Wapakoneta Senior High School	Wapakoneta, OH
Ms. T. J. Terranova	South Side Senior High School	Rockville Centre, NY
Derrek Thomas	Paul Laurence Dunbar High School	Lexington, KY
Paulett Thompson	National Trail High School	New Paris, OH
Janet M. Tillitski-Clark	Glen Oak High School West Campus	Canton, OH
Peter W. Tragos	New Trier Township High School	Winnetka, IL
Lillian Trudell	Troy High School	Troy, MI
Dr. Steve Turner	Hamilton High School	Hamilton, OH
John H. Underhill	Greenhills School	Ann Arbor, MI
David S. Van Meter III	Larry A. Ryle High School	Union, KY
Eileen Varnish	Our Lady of the Elms High School	Akron, OH
Kathleen Veith	Hudson High School	Hudson, OH
Vicki Venable	Claremore High School	Claremore, OK
Mary H. Vetter	Summit Country Day School	Cincinnati, OH
Joy E. Volz	Hamilton Heights High School	Arcadia, IN
Cynthia Vranich	Conard High School	West Hartford, CT
Mrs. Christine Ward	Lake Park West High School	Roselle, IL
Richard Wasowski	Ashland Senior High School	Ashland, OH
Lynn Waxman	Lakota West High School	West Chester, OH
Wes Weaver	Licking Valley High School	Newark, OH
Regina A. Webb	Notre Dame-Cathedral Latin School	Chardon, OH
Courtney Westerman	Saint Mary's Hall	San Antonio, TX
Carol J. Whitney	Willoughby South High School	Willoughby, OH
Michael Wilson	Magnificat High School	Rocky River, OH
Melissa J. Wolfe-Izworski	Sycamore High School	Cincinnati, OH
Jeff Wolff	Centerville High School	Dayton, OH
Tom Woodford	Hilliard Darby High School	Hilliard, OH
Paul M. Yanok	Bishop Hartley High School	Columbus, OH
Aubrey Zinn	Bel Air High School	Bel Air, MD

