



BRENTWOOD  
ACADEMY

English Department Handbook  
2019-2020



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## I. General Policies and Criteria

### A. Criteria for Composition Grades

A paper earning a grade of **A** has the following characteristics:

1. Originality in handling a significant topic
2. Logical development of a central idea with thorough supporting evidence
3. Effective organization with strong transitions and unity
4. Variety in sentence structure
5. Appropriate and lively diction
6. No major errors in grammar or expression (Major errors include, but are not limited to, the following: fragment, run-on sentence, comma splice, incorrect subject-verb or pronoun-antecedent agreement, incorrect verb or pronoun usage)

A paper earning a grade of **B** has the following characteristics:

1. A significant topic
2. Logical development of a central idea with evidence
3. Transitions and order
4. A variety in sentence structure
5. Appropriate diction
6. Few major errors in grammar or expression

A paper earning a grade of **C** has the following characteristics:

1. An adequate topic
2. Central idea with some support
3. Fairly clear organization
4. Adequate diction
5. Some major errors in grammar or expression

A paper earning a grade of **D** has the following characteristics:

1. A poor topic
2. Weak organization
3. Erratic diction
4. Some major errors in grammar or expression

A paper earning a grade of **F** has the following characteristics:

1. An inadequate topic or one the writer gives no evidence of understanding
2. No discernible organization
3. Distracting diction
4. Several major errors in grammar or expression

*Note: Any one of the above faults is enough to fail a paper.*

## **B. Grading Philosophy**

In evaluating tests, compositions, and oral presentations, teachers presume the grade for average work to be a **C**; in other words, a **C** performance indicates that the student has a working knowledge of the material but not mastery and thus the work is satisfactory. A **B** indicates near mastery of the material as well as some original insight. An **A** is awarded for exceptional achievement. At the other end of the scale, a **D** reflects marginal performance, and an **F** shows unacceptable performance.

## **C. Graduated Expectations for Evaluating Composition (6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup>)**

- Grades 6: accuracy and clarity
- Grades 7 and 8: accuracy, clarity, and structure
- Grades 9 and 10: accuracy, clarity, structure, and development
- Grades 11 and 12: accuracy, clarity, structure, development, originality, and style

## **D. Plagiarism**

A writer who uses someone else's words or original thoughts without giving credit to that person is guilty of plagiarism. In order to give credit properly, a writer must put quotations marks around quoted words and state the source; for paraphrased ideas, the writer must indicate where the paraphrase begins and state the source at the end of the passage. Anyone found guilty of plagiarism can receive no higher than an **F** on the paper. Anyone found guilty of willful plagiarism—that is, using material from a source and trying to hide that source—will automatically receive a **0** on the paper and meet with the grade chair and the dean of students (upper school) or middle school director (middle school) for discussion and punishment since the offense involves lying, cheating, and stealing.

## **E. Quoting, Paraphrasing, and Acknowledging Sources \***

Critical writing involves incorporating information from published sources into your own writing. Doing so requires the writer to be careful not to plagiarize, which is defined as an attempt "to steal and pass off (the ideas and words of another) as one's own" and to "present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source."

### 1. What Must Be Documented

#### a. Quotations

If you use an author's specific word or words, you must place those words within quotation marks, and you must credit the source.

*\* Source for this section: Material on critical writing from Belmont University.*

b. Ideas

If you borrow an author's specific ideas, you must document their source. As Bark and Birk in *A Handbook of Grammar, Rhetoric, Mechanics and Usage* explain, plagiarism results when the writer presents, as his own, the sequence of ideas, the arrangement of material, the pattern of thought of someone else, even though he expresses it in his own words. The language may be his, but he is presenting as the work of his brain, and taking credit for, the work of another's brain. He is, therefore, guilty of plagiarism if he fails to give credit to the original author of the pattern of ideas.

c. Common Knowledge

It is not necessary to document factual information considered to be in the public domain: e.g., birth and death dates of well-known figures, generally accepted dates of military, political, literary and other historical events. In general, factual information contained in multiple standard reference works can usually be considered to be in the public domain. If, however, you use the exact words of the reference source, you must credit the source.

2. To Create a Successful Summary or Paraphrase

- a. When reading source material, treat each passage as a distinct unit of thought to be incorporated into your own thoughts. Try to understand the passage as a whole, rather than pausing to write down ideas or phrases that may seem significant at first. Read purposefully, with the larger framework of your topic in mind, and integrate each reading into that controlling purpose.
- b. After reaching a clear understanding of the ideas contained in the source, summarize that information in your own words. Remember that you are taking notes, not copying down quotations. Your task is to “extract, distill and compress essential content that will be useful in creating a paraphrase.” Occasionally you may find it useful to quote words or phrases directly from the source, but you should limit yourself to very brief quotations. Also, be sure to use quotation marks and to record page numbers in your notes.

F. Credible Sources/Computing & Information Technology

*The Internet contains some extremely valuable, high-quality information sources – and it also contains some very unreliable, biased sources of misinformation. That is its nature; anyone who can manage to work their way into some webspace can post a website. That puts a higher burden on the student to evaluate the quality of each website used, whether it's for a class assignment or personal use.*

## How can a person tell if a website is credible?

*There are six ways to determine if a website is credible.*

- Author:

Information on the Internet with a listed author is one indication of a credible site. The fact that the author is willing to stand behind the information presented is a good indication that the information is reliable.

- Date:

The date of any research information is important, including information found on the Internet. By including a date, the website allows readers to make decisions about whether that information is recent enough for their purposes.

- Sources:

Credible websites, like books and scholarly articles, should cite the source of the information presented.

- Domain:

Some domains such as **.com**, **.org**, and **.net** can be purchased by any individual. However, the domain **.edu** is reserved for colleges and universities, while **.gov** denotes a government website. Both are usually credible sources for information (though a university will assign a **.edu** address to each of its students for personal use, in which case use caution when citing). Be careful with the domain **.org** because it is often used by non-profit organizations which may have an agenda of persuasion rather than education.

- Site Design:

This can be very subjective, but a well-designed site can be an indication of more reliable information. Good design helps make information more easily accessible.

- Writing Style:

Poor spelling and grammar are an indication that the site may not be credible. In an effort to make the information presented easy to understand, credible sites watch writing style closely.

*Information found: <https://uknowit.uwgb.edu/page.php?id=30276>*

### **G. TurnItIn.com**

All upper school English courses use the online writing submission service known as Turnitin.com; other upper school courses may also use the service since each student has an individual account. This program, used by over 10,000 schools and universities around the world, allows students to submit their papers electronically to Turnitin, where BA



teachers are able to check them for originality and to grade them online. Turnitin saves every paper it receives and compares each submission to its database of over forty-five billion pages of digital content.

Upper school English teachers provide their students with the passwords needed to set-up a course account. Every time a student submits a paper, Turnitin will confirm the submission by sending the writer an electronic receipt. Turnitin also tells the teacher exactly when the paper arrived, eliminating any ambiguities about late or missing papers.

Because Turnitin saves every paper a student submits for the course, both students and teachers are able to compare current papers with previous submissions to assess progress and trends in the student's work. When teachers grade a paper, they are able to use Turnitin's extensive bank of comments concerning problems with usage and grammar. By scrolling over the comment, a student can access a detailed description of the problem, as well as link to a short lesson that provides further explanation and examples. Teachers may also type personal remarks about the paper, which can be more extensive than brief notes written by hand in the margins. Turnitin also allows teachers to see when students have read their comments, providing a means of gauging the effectiveness of the feedback.

Since universities increasingly move to using online submissions to fight plagiarism, the Brentwood Academy English Department has found that Turnitin allows us to prepare our students better for the world of college writing, as well as to provide our students with more precise and more extensive assessment of their work.

## **H. Policy on Supplementary Sources**

The books chosen by the Brentwood Academy English Department have been selected quite deliberately because of their established literary merit and their value to students' lives and education. The purpose of requiring students to read these specific works is to help them broaden their knowledge and deepen their social and moral understanding of essential and enduring themes. In addition, reading good literature helps students to grow intellectually, to stimulate their vocabulary, to sharpen their critical thinking, and to increase their reading comprehension skills. No one learns well or feels deeply by reading a plot summary.

***Therefore, the use of outside summaries and/or criticisms, including all print and electronic sources, is strictly prohibited.***

Students are not to consult any supplementary or secondary sources in preparation for class discussions, seminars, tests/quizzes, or written assignments unless specifically instructed to do so by their English teacher. Additional help should be solicited from the teacher, rather than from supplementary sources.

## **I. Rationale for Summer Reading**

All students have summer reading requirements appropriate to grade and course level. These reading lists include both required and optional texts, with specific writing assignments due the first day or week of class. Students are reminded that the English Department policy prohibiting the use of supplementary material, both textual and electronic, applies to summer reading. Summer reading serves several distinct purposes in the educational program at Brentwood Academy. The rationale for summer reading is as follows:

1. To generate interest and pleasure in reading that enriches literary and philosophical experience
2. To use time not available during the school year to read material deemed “classic” or essential to those who are called “educated,” thus expanding cultural literacy
3. To prepare for thoughtful discussion and writing beginning the first day of class
4. To encourage a lifelong love of reading done leisurely—without the confines of time constraint.

## **J. Philosophy of Text Selection\***

Wallace Stevens once wrote, “Literature is the better part of life. To this it seems inevitably necessary to add, provided life is the better part of literature.” Students and parents have the right to demand that education today keep students in touch with the reality of the world outside the classroom. Much of classic literature asks questions as valid and significant today as when the literature first appeared, questions like “What is the nature of humanity?” “Why do people praise individuality and practice conformity?” “What do people need for a good life?” and “What is the nature of the good person?”

The BA English Department employs books, classic or contemporary, which do not lie to the young about the perilous but wondrous times we live in, books which talk of the fears, hopes, joys, and frustrations people experience, books about people not only as they are but as they can be. In selecting books for reading by our students, BA English teachers consider the contribution which each work may make to the education of the reader, its aesthetic value, its honesty, its readability for a particular group of students, and its appeal to adolescents. The study of literature has always been pursued in order to better understand the human condition. English teachers, however, may use different works for different purposes. Why is the study of literature so important? Of course, we want our students to be well read, and hopefully to enjoy reading in general. Ultimately, though, when a student reads, a student also thinks. The critical and creative thought process, discussions, and debates that result when a student and teacher analyze and interpret a piece of literature are boundless.

*\*Source for this section: [www.ncte.org/positions/statements/righttoreadguidelines](http://www.ncte.org/positions/statements/righttoreadguidelines)*

## K. Reading is Foundation

“If you don’t like peas, it is probably because you have not had them fresh. It is the difference between reading a great book and reading the summary on the back.”

- Lemony Snicket, *Shouldn't You Be in School?*

Reading is one of the most important things one can do. For all of the Brentwood Academy English classes, it is the most critical and essential aspect to a student’s learning and ultimately, success. We make this declaration because the reading that is completed will serve as the foundation for everything else required of you in the classroom: the quizzes, journals, discussions, projects, research, creative writing, papers and testing/examinations all stem from deliberate and complete reading on the student’s part. The conscious decision not to read, to read half-heartedly, incompletely, or without seeking help/guidance with your reading, is to set yourself up, almost from the beginning, for failure. We want you to avoid failure.

When reading, take advantage of the numerous, helpful and easy ways to access tools for comprehending the reading.

**1. Annotate**

While reading, jot down ideas or questions in the margin.

**2. Box**

Literally, draw boxes around dates, ages, weather conditions/changes, settings/locations mentioned throughout the story.

**3. Highlight**

Use a yellow highlighter to mark an insightful or what you feel is an important event, realization, or turning point in the story. Highlighting may also be used in conjunction with annotation: highlight important literary devices such as imagery, conflict, allusion or symbolism. Next to the highlighted section, reference what the device is.

**4. Summarize**

At the conclusion of each chapter or story, write a brief three or four sentence summary about the most important aspects/developments of that particular block of reading.

**5. Unlock Vocabulary**

Take the time to look up unfamiliar/difficult or unusual words. Place the definition very close to the actual work in the margin.

**6. Underline**

Using a pen, not a highlighter, underline favorite passages.

**7. Compile Characters**

Construct a “Cast of Characters” much like you would find at the beginning of a play. Keep tabs on your characters. Divide and group them by importance. Jot down a handful of important adjectives about each. Know their relationships and fates.

Remember too, the act of reading, if it is to be done well, demands that you avoid distractions. Turn your electronics off for the duration of your reading, or better yet, avoid them altogether, and read in another room. Read with good light. Try your best to read when you are not exhausted. Break up the reading, especially if you have several pages, into manageable blocks.

**The Brentwood Academy English Department selects their scope and sequence with regard to reading for the following reasons:**

1. To expand student's understanding of the human condition.
2. To encourage students to participate vicariously in experiences different from their own, helping them to understand more deeply the experiences of people in various historic, cultural, or economic circumstances.
3. To enhance and develop student's vocabulary.
4. On the most practical level, to develop the skill of comprehension with the words of others, and in turn, allows for the communication of their own thoughts, clearly and articulately, in writing or speaking.

*"We need intimate knowledge of the past," C.S. Lewis asserted in a sermon, "a person who has lived in many places is not likely to be deceived by the local errors of his native village."*

**The Brentwood Academy English Department supports the traditional canon of classical (ACCLAIMED) literature as necessary and important for the following reasons:**

1. Invites students to be a part of a tradition, a large one, of writers who did it first or did the best.
2. Provides a foundation, a frame of reference for future texts and classes, sometimes, beyond English classes.
3. The works often go deeper and often richer with the human experience.
4. The works serve as a gateway to the past. We may not subscribe or agree with what a particular classic, asserts, but they are always a great catalyst to thinking about life and God.
5. They can give form to future experiences, providing models, terms of comparison, schemes for classification, scales of values, and examples of beauty.
6. A true college prep school experience is predicated on these works.
7. AP Language and Composition and AP Literature and Composition rely on these pieces as a frame of reference.

*Reading the classics of the past allows us to live in many places of imagination and intellect.*

## “A Comment About Censorship”

These are scary days in which to raise teenagers. I know. I’ve had four of them. Part of the problem is that we have a generation that has been exposed to unprecedented amounts of sexual behavior in the media and on the Internet. They see it, they talk about it, their hormones react, and a lot of kids wind up in painful situations

Literature is the safe and traditional vehicle through which we learn about the world and pass on values from one generation to the next. Books save lives.

Contemporary young adult literature surprises some people, because it is an accurate reflection of the way today’s teenagers talk, think, and behave. But these books must be honest in order to connect to the teen reader. America’s teens are desperate for responsible, trustworthy adults to create situations in which they can discuss the issues that are of the highest concern for them. Reading and discussing books is one of the most effective ways to get teens to think through and learn about the challenges of adolescence.

Most of the censorship I see is fear-driven. I respect that. The world is a very scary place. It is a terrifying place in which to raise children, and in particular, teenagers. It is human nature to nurture and protect children as they grow into adulthood. But censoring books that deal with difficult, adolescent issues does not protect anybody. Quite the opposite. It leaves kids in darkness and makes them vulnerable.

Censorship is the child of fear and the father of ignorance. Our children cannot afford to have the truth of the world withheld from them. They need us to be brave enough to give them great books so they can learn how to grow up into the men and women we want them to be.

Laurie Halse Anderson, author of *Speak*

## II. Critical Writing\*

Like all art, literature gives us pleasure because it transports us from the real world to exotic and far-off places. Of course, it is possible to enjoy literature without analyzing it, but because literature presents intellectual challenges, wrestling with these challenges enhances pleasure. By writing about literature, we see more to appreciate; we also learn that good literature, instead of being removed from life, reflects and gives meaning to it.

Writing a critical essay is not like participating in a classroom discussion or ordinary conversation because critical essays use formal diction and pursue (with great determination) a specific point. A critical paper must only include evidence and analysis that strictly supports the thesis, convincing the reader that the argument is credible and sound.

Critical writing demands tight organization and control, accurate facts, strong support, thoughtful analysis, and, equally important, revision and proofreading. Remember that writing is a process, and a first draft is only the beginning. Revision is vital in crafting a good essay. Growth as a writer occurs during hours of constant attention to the process; excellence is not the result of one evening's effort.

In all work submitted for English courses, students at Brentwood Academy must follow the style guidelines of the Modern Language Association (MLA).

### A. Reading the Literature

The first step in writing good literary criticism is to read the work well. One reads well when he analyzes what he has read, going beyond simply understanding the plot. Critical reading means one develops ideas about the work. To do this, the student must look at different aspects of the work and discover relationships that give the work unity, coherence, and power.

#### 1. Listen to the language.

Pay attention to the way the author uses language, especially choice of words (diction), sentence structure (syntax), sound qualities (euphony) of language, connotations and multiple meanings of key words, and various dialects. Look up unfamiliar words that seem crucial to understanding a passage, especially in poetry.

#### 2. Discover the truths within a work.

Look for basic themes. Usually authors present themes indirectly through dialogue, events, and details of setting. Underline or mark events, dialogue, and details of setting that seem to develop a theme.

#### 3. Identify and underline what is typical of characters.

Note thoughts, words, and deeds of each major character that identifies him or her as typical. Try to decide how the author is using these recurring behavior patterns or attitudes of a character to develop ideas.

4. Analyze the nature of the world the author presents.

As you read, think about the following questions: Is the setting hostile or friendly, ugly or beautiful? Are the characters mean-spirited or friendly, driven by forces beyond their control or operating by free will? Does fate seem to be blind or purposeful? Is good rewarded and evil punished?

5. Note the significance of titles and epigraphs.

Is there an important quotation placed at the beginning of a work or chapter? How do these offer insight? How do they relate to the theme of the work?

Essays about literature are journeys *of* self-discovery, as well as journeys *to* self-discovery. Good writers will develop new ideas about both as they write. Writing is not just the end product of thinking: writing forces you to think carefully about how you know what you know and then to record that thinking.

*\* Sources for this section:*

Griffith, Kelley. *Writing Essays About Literature: A Guide and Style Sheet*. New York: HBJ, 1982. Print.  
Roberts, Edgar V. *Thinking and Writing About Literature*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1984. Print.

## **B. Defining Your Audience**

Your audience is defined as the person(s) for whom you are writing. In a sense, however, you are part of your audience. You write to discover and clarify your ideas and to convince yourself and others of the validity of those ideas. When writing critical essays, you should always assume that your audience is familiar with the piece of literature you are writing about, since doing so allows you to develop ideas rather than retell plot. Never tell the story to "set up" a major point; this is plot summary and should be avoided at all times.

## **C. Developing a Good Thesis for Literary Criticism**

A good essay topic needs to be thought-provoking, meaningful, and narrowly focused.

1. Find a thought-provoking topic.

One way to determine if an essay topic is good is to ask yourself how easily an average reader could support your thesis after reading the work just once. A topic is good if most readers could not support your thesis without reviewing or re-studying the work. This means your topic is deep and thought-provoking. The most meaningless topic and thesis, therefore, is one that simply retells what happens in the work; therefore, do not use plot summary in your literary paper.

## 2. Narrow the topic.

Most of the papers you will write in high school and in college will run between 500 and 2000 words. Your topic is good if you can discuss it within those limits.

Consider these examples:

"Comedy in Romeo and Juliet" is too broad for an essay topic.

"The nurse as a comic figure" is more specific and manageable.

"Love in Romeo and Juliet" is too broad.

"Juliet's mature love versus Romeo's adolescent love" is better.

"Values in Romeo and Juliet" is too broad.

"Shakespeare's attitude toward suicide" is better.

## 3. Write this narrowed topic, or central idea, at the top of your rough draft.

The central idea is at the core of your thesis and your essay. Everything in the essay should be directly related to this idea or should contribute to the reader's understanding of this idea. Never lose sight of your central idea while developing your essay.

## 4. Find support.

Once you have determined your central idea, you must skim through your primary source again and take notes (observations, facts, examples, specifics) with your central idea in mind. Do not just look at the highlights of the work; get back into the text. Now is the time to examine closely the author's use of language, universal truths, characters, and settings.

## 5. Find relationships.

After gathering information from the work about your central idea, begin organizing your thoughts by finding relationships. Then brainstorm and group similar observations. Ask yourself: Is my information correct? Are my observations valid and logical? Write down the main points you will use to prove and enlighten your audience about your central idea.

## 8. Write your thesis.

Your thesis statement is the last sentence in the introduction and immediately follows your central idea. The thesis tells your reader what you are going to do with your central idea (or where your central idea is going).



For example, if the central idea is "the nurse as a comic figure in *Romeo and Juliet*," then your thesis might be the following (many different thesis statements can derive from a single central idea):

"In the otherwise tragic world of undeserved death and destruction, the nurse provides comic relief with her speech and dialect, her inappropriate timing, and her observations on courtly love."

Consider another example, if the central idea is "Scrooge's character transforms in *A Christmas Carol*," then your thesis might be:

"Taking into account the way a character's background can shape him, Ebenezer Scrooge experiences a great transformation as seen when he is visited by the ghost who reminds him of his past, when he is visited by the ghost that shows him the present, and when he is visited by the ghost who shows him what his life will be like if he continues to live in the same way he has."

Note how the thesis stems from the central idea. The central idea is the glue to your paper; the thesis sentence shows the parts that are to be fastened together, that is, the topics through which the central idea will be demonstrated. The above thesis statement indicates that this essay will discuss these topics:

- how the nurse provides comic relief with her speech and dialect,
- how the nurse provides comic relief with her inappropriate timing, and
- how the nurse provides comic relief with her observations on courtly love.

Each of the above points will be used as the topic sentences for each main section of the essay.

#### **D. Communicating Effectively**

The purpose of critical writing is to communicate effectively.

1. Make sure that all arguments are clear and concise.

Avoid wordiness; tighten and strengthen by using one specific example after another. Do not become swept up in emotion or poetic expression that leaves your reader wondering what you have just said. Be sure that the ideas in your paper move forward. Repetition stagnates your argument, resulting in a low grade.

2. Stay grounded in the text.

Keep to your point by relating everything to the central idea; however, do not use plot summary. Direct quotations from primary or secondary sources should be regarded as the only evidence for your argument. Select the quotations that best support your

- argument and that directly relate to the point you are developing. Do not use quotations in place of development: quotations support the argument; they do not create it.
3. Reason soundly.  
Avoid faulty logic. Use specific examples from the text long before you offer quoted evidence. Remember that it is better to develop a few topics fully than many scantily.
  4. Maintain your perspective.  
Do not refer to the essay, to yourself, or to a quotation. Avoid writing "This quote proves . . ." Ask your teacher when you need help getting into your analysis. Avoid using first ("I") or second ("you") person in your discussion. Do not ask your reader questions. Also, do not moralize or preach, especially in your conclusion.
  5. Vary sentence structure.  
For example, do not begin every sentence with the subject. Combine sentences to tighten style, using transitions between paragraphs and between ideas within a paragraph. For instance, include such words as *in addition*, *next*, *therefore*, etc.
  6. Elevate your diction and choose your words carefully.  
Do not write the way you speak; this will require thought and sometimes reworking a sentence. Do not insert a random word from a thesaurus without checking a dictionary to confirm its appropriateness.
  7. Use the appropriate tense.  
Describe fictional events, whether in drama, poetry, or prose fiction, in the present tense. Only historical events are past tense.
  8. Follow rules for correct documentation:
    - a. When parenthetically documenting a primary source and no other source is used in the essay, the author's last name should appear in the first parenthetical citation, followed by page number or line number of the quote. For example: (Twain 177). Do not place a comma between author's last name and number. If citing an Internet source, provide the name of the source only because page numbers are usually not available, e.g. (Anderson).
    - b. When quoting from a play, cite a line by providing the act, scene, and lines as follows: Driven to despair, Macbeth decides, "Life's but a walking shadow" (5.5.24).

- c. When quoting dialogue between two characters from a play, use the following format:

Willy's delusions consistently show how much Happy and Bernard idolized Biff, especially when they argue over who will carry his football gear:

BERNARD. Biff, I'm carrying your helmet, ain't I?  
HAPPY. No, I'm carrying the helmet.  
BERNARD. Oh, Biff, you promised me.  
HAPPY. I'm carrying the helmet. (Miller 2.213-216)

- c. Information within a quotation can be changed two ways: ellipsis (three spaced periods) indicates that material has been omitted. If omitting one sentence or more within a quotation, put a period before the three ellipsis dots. Brackets ([ ]) are used to add or change information within a quotation (tense, pronoun, verb, subject, etc.).

9. Recognize that the appearance of your essay affects your argument.

The appearance projects you and your attitudes. The better your essay looks, the more favorably your reader will think of your argument. Formal essays should be double-spaced, Times New Roman font, 12 point, one inch margins, black ink, on plain paper.

10. Remember that revision is part of the writing process.

As you revise, focus on these ideas:

- a. Explain how your argument further develops the central idea.
- b. Regard the text as evidence to substantiate your arguments, not as material to be described.
- c. Demonstrate that all exemplifying details are relevant to the main point.
- d. Make your statements accurate, forceful, and concise.

### III. Rules of Form for Formal Assignments

#### A. Title Page Format

1. Center the title of the essay three inches from the top of the page.
2. Set the title itself in plain text; do not use quotation marks or italics.
3. Center and single-space the following information three inches from the bottom of the page:

Student's Name  
Teacher's Name/Name of Course  
Assignment  
Date of Submission

4. Please write the BA Honor Code first.
5. The following sentence is specific to writing assignments and differs from the BA honor code pledge. Center the following sentence one line above the bottom margin on the page:

BA Writing Pledge: I pledge that the work and the ideas in this paper,  
unless otherwise cited, are mine alone.

This is an example of how pledges should be written on the title page:

On my honor as a Brentwood Academy student, I have neither given nor received help  
on this work.

I pledge that the work and ideas in this paper, unless otherwise cited, are mine alone.

*(See the following page for an exact example of a title page.)*

The Similarities and Differences of Clarence Day and Asa Stryker

Carter Cheeseman  
Mr. Lehman/English 8  
Short Story Essay  
August 15, 2014

On my honor as a Brentwood Academy student, I have neither given nor received help  
on this work.

I pledge that the work and ideas in this paper, unless otherwise cited, are mine alone.

Carter Cheeseman

## **B. Page Format**

1. Double space text throughout.
2. Set margins at 1 inch on all sides.
3. Select the font New Times Roman, which is a plain font.
4. Number all pages of the essay with the exception of the first page of the paper.
5. Center the title at the top of the first page, double space, and begin the text.
6. Place the student's last name and page number at the top right-hand corner on all subsequent pages including the works cited page. For example, in the top right corner of the second page of Jane Doe's paper, the heading would be set in this manner:

Doe 2

The text would continue on the next double-spaced line.

## **C. Outline Page**

In the ninth and tenth grades at Brentwood Academy, English classes primarily require what is known as a sentence outline. In this format, all headings are stated as complete sentences. In the eleventh and twelfth grades, the topic outline is commonly used. In this format, headings are expressed in single words or brief phrases. Students should check with their teachers to see which format is preferred for particular assignments.

In both types of outlines, the most important ideas are identified with Roman numerals, with subordinating ideas as capital letters. Numbers and lower case letters are used for secondary and tertiary headings. Logic requires that every I has a II, every A has a B, etc. Each letter or number must be followed by a period.

I.

A.

1.

a.

b.

2.

B.

II.

## 1. Organization of Topic Outline

- I. First Main Idea
  - A. First Supporting Point or Example
    - 1. First Supporting Point for “A.”
    - 2. Second Supporting Point for “A.”
    - 3. Third Supporting Point for “A.”
  - B. Supporting Point or Example
    - 1. First Supporting Point for “B.”
    - 2. Second Supporting Point for “B.”
- II. Second Main Idea
  - A. First Supporting Point or Example for “II.”
  - B. Second Supporting Point or Example for “II.”
- III. Third Main Idea
  - A. First Supporting Point or Example for “III.”
  - B. Second Supporting Point or Example for “III.”

Please note that neither the Introduction nor the Conclusion are included as headings in a topic outline. The outline begins with the first major point. Also, there may be more than two points under any heading, but there should never be only one point below a heading. In the example above, tertiary points have been included under point “I” for illustration purposes only. Normally, they are used wherever needed in the outline.

## 2. Sample Sentence Outline (used in grade 10)

### **I. Introductory Paragraph**

- A. Make a general statement that leads to the central idea (CI).
- B. Introduce author and work.
- C. State Central Idea.
- D. Close with the thesis statement.

### **II. Body Paragraphs:** Each begins with a full topic sentence with transition (must relate to thesis and CI)

- A. Introduce and explain first major point of development (two sentences).
  - 1. Set up example or quotation.
    - a. Use a “quotation.”
    - b. Analyze the quotation, explaining how it connects or supports the main idea to the topic sentence.
  - 2. Set up second example or quotation.
    - a. Use a “quotation.”
    - b. Analyze the quotation, explaining how it connects or supports the main idea to the topic sentence.
- B. Introduce and explain second major point of development (two sentences).
  - 1. Set up example or quotation.
    - a. Use a “quotation.”
    - b. Analyze the quotation, explaining how it connects or supports the main idea to the topic sentence.
  - 2. Set up second example or quotation.
    - a. Use a “quotation.”
    - b. Analyze the quotation, explaining how it connects or supports the main idea to the topic sentence.

### **III. Full topic sentence with transition (must relate to thesis and CI)**

- A. Introduce and explain first major point of development (two sentences).
  - 1. Set up example or quotation.
    - a. Use a “quotation.”
    - b. Analyze the quotation, explaining how it connects or supports the main idea to the topic sentence.
  - 2. Set up second example or quotation.
    - a. Use a “quotation.”
    - b. Analyze the quotation, explaining how it connects or supports the main idea to the topic sentence.
- B. Introduce and explain second major point of development (two sentences).
  - 1. Set up example or quotation.
    - a. Use a “quotation.”
    - b. Analyze the quotation, explaining how it connects or supports the main idea to the topic sentence.
  - 2. Set up second example or quotation.
    - a. Use a “quotation.”
    - b. Analyze the quotation, explaining how it connects or supports the main idea to the topic sentence.



#### IV. Full topic sentence with transition (must relate to thesis and CI)

- A. Introduce and explain first major point of development (two sentences).
  - 1. Set up example or quotation.
    - a. Use a “quotation.”
    - b. Analyze the quotation, explaining how it connects or supports the main idea to the topic sentence.
  - 2. Set up second example or quotation.
    - a. Use a “quotation.”
    - b. Analyze the quotation, explaining how it connects or supports the main idea to the topic sentence.
- B. Introduce and explain second major point of development (two sentences).
  - 1. Set up example or quotation.
    - a. Use a “quotation.”
    - b. Analyze the quotation, explaining how it connects or supports the main idea to the topic sentence.
  - 2. Set up second example or quotation.
    - a. Use a “quotation.”
    - b. Analyze the quotation, explaining how it connects or supports the main idea to the topic sentence.

#### V. Conclusion

- A. Restate thesis in a different way.
- B. Summary of CI.
- C. Clearly state the “truth” about human nature/behavior that the essay reveals (universal application).
- D. Clincher

#### E. MLA Quotation Citations Examples

There are numerous ways to set-up quotations in a formal essay. The correct method is dictated by the kind of quotation being utilized. Often, placement on the actual typed page will differ, as well as punctuation and even quotation marks. Here are some common types of quotations:

##### **Type (A) – Short, run into the line quotation:**

Jem Finch reflects about the aftermath of Robinson’s trial, “Perhaps Atticus was right, but the events of the summer hung over us like smoke in a closed room” (246).

\*The quotation is *four typed lines or less* so develop a lead-in and write the quotation as a natural part of the paragraph. Quotation marks are needed and final mark of punctuation is placed after the final parenthesis.

**Type (B) – Set apart quotation, due to length of narration (more than four typed lines):**

Guy Montag is desperate to locate the censored book hidden by his wife Mildred:

He searched the house and found the books where Mildred had stacked them behind the refrigerator. Some were missing and he knew that she had started on her own slow process of dispersing the dynamite in her house, stick by stick. But he was not angry now, only exhausted and bewildered with himself. He carried the books into the backyard and hid them in the bushes near the alley fence. For tonight only, he thought, in case she decides to do any more burning. (102)

\*The quotation is *more than four typed lines*, so develop a lead-in and *set apart or block* the entire quotation, making sure to double-space, omit quotation marks, and move the ending mark of punctuation before the first parenthesis.

**Type (C) – Dialogue in a play, between two or more characters:**

Romeo pleads with Juliet to run away and marry:

ROMEO. My sweet, methinks we should run away together.

JULIET. Nay my love. Prithee, share some other means for our destiny.

ROMEO. That I whilst not do. No one loved more than I. (II.3.65-68)

\*Dialogue (conversation) in a play between characters requires a lead-in, followed by: blocked indentation, all CAPS for each character name, a period, and the dialogue. No quotation marks and final mark of punctuation is moved before the first parenthesis.

**Type (D) – Direct quotation by character within narration:**

Jem, when given his first rifle, is cautioned by Atticus to stick to a code of hunting: “Atticus said to Jem one day, ‘I’d rather you shot at tin cans in the back yard, but I know you’ll go after birds. Shoot all the bluejays you want, if you can hit’em, but remember it’s a sin to kill a mockingbird.’ That was the only time I ever heard Atticus say it was a sin to do something” (94).

\*Sometimes *narration will have a character speaking within the narration*. After providing a lead-in, use double quotation marks around the areas of narration. Use single quotation marks around character's speech.

**Type (E) – Quotation with question mark or exclamation point:**

Montag is careful to avoid busy streets in his quest to find the truth: “I wonder if they were the ones who killed Clarisse?” (128).

\*Quotations that contain a question mark or exclamation point retain that punctuation as part of the passage. The overall quote ends, with a period following the final parenthesis.

**List of Works Cited**

A list of works cited provides the reader with source information that the writer has actually used and cited in the paper. This list is arranged alphabetically by author and is double-spaced throughout. There are three parts or sections to each entry: author information, title information, and publishing information. Guidance and examples may be found at <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

The purpose of a works cited is to acknowledge those sources from which you draw in the form of quotations within the actual text of the paper.

Below are a few samples of typical sources.

**Book with one author**

Author's last name, first name. *Title of book*. Publisher, Year of publication.

Lewis, C.S. *The Four Loves*. Harcourt Brace and Co., 1988.

**Book with more than one author**

Gillespie, Paula and Neal Lamar. *The Allyn and Bacon Guide to Peer Tutoring*. Allyn, 2000.

**Edition of a book**

Crowley, Sharon, and Debra Hawhee. *Ancient Rhetorics for Contemporary Students*. 3rd edition, edited by Pearson/Longman, 2004.

**Editor as author**

Editor's name. *Title*. Edition (if not the first). Publisher, copyright date.

Colby, Vineta, edited by *World Authors: 1980-1985*. H. W. Wilson, Co., 1991.

**Work from an anthology**

Last name, first name. "Title of Essay." *Title of Collection*, edited by Editor's name(s). publisher, year, Page range of entry.

Vannatta, Dennis. "H.E. Bates." *Cyclopedia of World Authors*, edited by Frank N. Magill Salem Press, 2004, pp. 235-237.

**Work from an Internet site**

Editor, author, or compiler name (if available). *Name of site*. Version number. Name of institution/organization affiliated with the site (sponsor or publisher), date of resource creation (if available). Medium of publication. date of access.

Aristotle. *Poetics*. Trans. S. H. Natcher. The Internet Classic Archive. Web Atomic and Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 13 Sept. 2007. Web. 4 Nov. 2008.  
<<http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/poetics.html>> (NOTE: The URL is only added at the request of your teacher.)

**Work from a literary subscription service**

Author of article last name, first name. "Title of article." *Title of where the article first appeared in print* Vol. Issue (year): Pages. Database name. Web. Date database was accessed. (NOTE: The URL is only added at the request of your teacher. Place the URL in angle <> brackets.)

**Work in an online scholarly journal**

Dolby, Nadine. "Research in Youth Culture and Policy: Current Conditions and Future Directions." *Social Work and Society: The International Online-Only Journal* 6.2 (2008). Web. 20 May 2009.

Listed below are these reminders about works cited:

1. In all citations longer than one line, every line below the first line is indented.
2. No state is necessary. Identify the page numbers after the date of publication.

Sparrow, Jack. "Sailing for Fun and Profit," *Tips for Modern Mariners*.  
edited by David Jones. Tortuga Publishers, 1998. pp. 128-135.

3. BA students should consult the following resources with further questions regarding citation format:
  - a. <http://citationmachine.net> or <https://owl.english.purdue.edu>

## E. Middle School Sample Essay

### The Similarities and Differences of Clarence Day and Asa Stryker

When comparing two characters from different stories, striking similarities often rise to the surface. However, every person has certain quirks unique to them. These quirks are not necessarily bad, but they do make each individual special. In the text *50 Great Short Stories* two characters initially appear to have the same demeanor, but when scrutinized more carefully, clearly have many differences. Asa M. Stryker, one of the main characters in "The Man Who Shot Snapping Turtles," and Mr. Day, one of the main characters in "Father Wakes Up the Village," are alike in how they love a particular item, but they differ in how they react when they don't get that certain item and in how they attempt to get it back.

Both of the men in the stories crave a certain object. Mr. Day is a man set on ice. His craving for it is described as, "He strongly objected to spending one day of his life without a glass of cold water beside his plate at every meal" (Day 315). Ice for Mr. Day is like the modern day cellphone; he cannot live without it. He is a strong-willed man and when he does not have what he wants, he goes out and gets it. Asa Stryker has a love for a particular item, too. He is addicted to Mallards. The narrator states, "In his insensitive sounding way, he admired them, minutely observing their markings, and he cherished and protected them like pets" (Wilson 255). Stryker loves the ducks in his pond because they keep him company, and he thinks they are beautiful. While, Stryker has more affection for the ducks than a craving like Mr. Day does, they both still share a strong, common attraction to something.

The men's initial reaction to the loss of their attraction, however, is different. Mr. Day, as soon as he hears the news of the failure to bring the ice, tells his son, "...that if any ice man imagined for a moment that he could behave in that manner, he, father, would take his . . . head off" (Day 318). Father Day clearly is making a huge deal out of nothing. He completely blows up

at the merchants he talks to in town and creates a big scene. When Stryker, on the other hand, loses what he loves, he is initially more controlled than Mr. Day. He just sits and ponders the serious matter of losing his ducks. The narrator describes his reaction as, "he lost brood after brood (of ducks) in this way, the subject came, in fact, to obsess him" (Wilson 255). Stryker is more irritated by the loss of his ducks than angry. Stryker and Mr. Day are angry, but one is more controlled than the other.

These men prove again to be dissimilar in their efforts to regain what they have lost. Losing his ice was a sore deal for sure, but not at all cause for Mr. Day to take it out on the rest of the town. He not only went to the ice house, the place where the delivered ice was stored, but went to the butcher's shop and a home goods store. At these various locations he reprimanded and demanded until he finally got his way. This may have been fair at the ice house because it was their fault he didn't have his ice in the first place, but certainly not at the two other stores. Unlike Mr. Day, Stryker didn't go bully people to get his way. He wanted the work done to rid his pond of duck eating turtles, so he hired a few men and went out there with them to put in hard work to accomplish his goal. He first drained his pond, then raked the bottom and killed all the turtles he found. Stryker knows how to solve a problem without forcing someone into submission like Mr. Day does.

Stryker and Mr. Day are people who have similar basic characteristics, such as a particular craving for something. However, when these characters are observed at a more minute level, it is found that underneath surprising similarities lies a completely different person with different reactions and responses to various things. In comparing characters from different stories, the reader has to be careful not to make arbitrary assumptions. Going deep into the text can uncover

things that were unknown before and can help shape a better picture of the individual characters themselves because each person in a story is special.

#### Works Cited

Day, Clarence. "Father Wakes up the Village." *50 Great Short Stories*, edited by Milton Crane.

Bantam Dell, 1952, pp. 315-320.

Wilson, Edmund. "The Man Who Shot Snapping Turtles." *50 Great Short Stories*, edited by

Milton Crane. Bantam Dell, 1952, pp. 254-266.

- reflects new 8th Edition MLA standards

## F. Upper School Sample Essay

### A Dream Differed

Dreams, like the moon, push and pull the sea of humanity. People are constantly in pursuit of a sparkling ambition that they believe will fulfill them or bring them one step closer to happiness. While some will succeed in achieving their goal, others will find their desire to be unattainable. The obsessive pursuit of a dream can destroy a person when his or her goal is never realized. However, this objective has the potential to deal an even more potent blow when one's aspiration falls short of the intrigue surrounding it. In *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald, Jay Gatsby strives to achieve his dreams through the means of materialism, but he is disappointed to discover that the morals of humanity are flawed and unreliable and that the advance of time has corrupted the integrity of his past.

Throughout *The Great Gatsby*, the plot revolves around Jay Gatsby's pursuit of his single, ambitious dream. What he does not realize, however, is that his desired future is merely an idyllic reflection of his past. Jay Gatsby is infatuated with Daisy Buchanan, and he longs to one day reconnect with her, the girl of his dreams. Gatsby's physical and emotional distance from Daisy is symbolized by the green light at the end of her dock, which, like the north star, serves as a beacon for Gatsby as he endures separation from her. Before reuniting with Daisy, he regards this light as, in contrast to himself, "very near to her, almost touching her. It had seemed as close as a star to the moon" (Fitzgerald 93). Once he meets her again, Gatsby no longer has to wish upon a star or, in his case, a green light. Significantly, he notices that the light has gone out once he is with her again and the distance between them no longer exists. Gatsby's reunion with Daisy allows him to stop wishing and begin living. Gatsby has spent five years yearning to see Daisy, but, when the time comes for his dream to be fulfilled, he is plagued with anxiety. On the day of the modest tea party in which Gatsby and Daisy are meant to be reunited, Nick observes



that “[Gatsby] was pale, and there were dark signs of sleeplessness beneath his eyes” (84). This is the day that will either lead to the fulfillment or destruction of Gatsby’s deep-rooted desire. In a whirlwind of longing and fear, Gatsby knows that this simple tea party is not to be taken lightly, and this causes him to be disquieted as the morning drags on. Nick is able to discern that what Gatsby envisions as his perfect future is actually his past, but Gatsby refuses to accept that one cannot return to a bygone reality. Gatsby longs to achieve what he came so close to having before he left for the war, a relationship with Daisy. Right when he was on the cusp of having something more with Daisy, Gatsby was deployed, and since “[Daisy] wanted her life shaped now, immediately” (151), she hastily married another man. Therefore, what they had, or might have had, was lost. Gatsby wants his new relationship with Daisy to be a reflection of their relationship in the past. The complication is that Gatsby’s mirror of history is warped and shrouded by the utopian haze of years gone by, and thus the perfection of his dream is next to impossible to grasp. Gatsby’s idealism blinds him to the fact that time creates change, and that transformation born of passing moments can never be undone. Gatsby has no doubt that his dreams can be fulfilled, and this is shown when he says, “‘Can’t repeat the past?...Why of course you can!’ He looked around him wildly, as if the past were lurking here in the shadow of his house, just out of reach of his hand” (110). Gatsby sincerely believes that he and Daisy can have the same connection as before. However, he fails to realize that not only has Daisy changed, but he has changed as well. He cannot undo what time has engraved on their hearts. Jay Gatsby’s pursuit of his dream propels the plot of *The Great Gatsby* and pushes Gatsby further into a past that, despite Gatsby’s efforts, cannot be relived.

As a method of accomplishing his dreams, Jay Gatsby indulges in the excessive materialism that is so characteristic of the 1920's nouveaux riches in hope that Daisy will come to one of his parties and see him as worthy of her love. The entire purpose of Gatsby's opulence, from his house to his festivities, is so his obsession of being with Daisy again can be realized. Gatsby pores over every detail of his life to improve his chances of reuniting with Daisy, and his wealth facilitates this process. He goes so far as to specifically buy his mansion on the West Egg for its proximity to the Buchanan's house. When Nick is shocked by the closeness of the two houses, Jordan informs him that "Gatsby bought that house so that Daisy would be just across the bay" (78). It is here that the depth of Gatsby's desire is shown. His dream of a future with Daisy transcends hope and prayer into the realm of his possessions. Gatsby is fully committed to seeing that he at least gets one final opportunity to be with Daisy. Gatsby is notorious for his lavish and riotous parties, which welcome guests ranging from admired celebrities to uninvited interlopers. A little-known fact, however, is the true intent behind these parties. Gatsby has a different purpose for them than simply indulgence, and, as Jordan divulges, "he half expected [Daisy] to walk into one of his parties, some night...but she never did" (79). Gatsby resorts to all kinds of measures to ensure that he sees Daisy again. For Gatsby, his parties are an indirect way for him and Daisy to be reunited, but when she never shows he does not lose hope. Once Daisy reenters his life, Gatsby witnesses his wealth gain an entirely new dimension that is reflective of his passion for Daisy. Even the most exorbitant of Gatsby's belongings adopt a new value as Gatsby observes Daisy as she interacts with and marvels at his prosperity. Gatsby may have labored to get to his current position of affluence, but his love for Daisy outweighs the value of all of his treasures combined. To him, only Daisy's opinion is of worth, shown when "he

revalued everything in his house according to the measure of response it drew from her well-loved eyes” (91). In part, Gatsby made his money so he could be worthy of Daisy’s love, and getting her approval makes all of his toil worth it. Gatsby may believe that what he and Daisy share is true love, but he is not above subtly trying to buy her love as well by impressing her with how rich he is. *The Great Gatsby*’s materialism is symbolized through Daisy’s voice, which reflects the value and abilities of money. Gatsby makes the revelation that Daisy’s voice is akin to “money- that was the inexhaustible charm that rose and fell in it, the jingle of it, the cymbals’ song of it” (120). No matter what Daisy’s voice is saying or doing, its beauty and mystique captivates its listeners. Her articulation displays the vast power and the shallowness that money contains. Materialism and wealth are at the forefront of the novel, bringing with them the raucous, flashy, and luxurious 1920’s lifestyle that is both admired and scorned today. This concern for wealth is, for Gatsby, a means of his dream becoming a reality.

Corruption has slowly but surely bled into Jay Gatsby’s life and business, but he still manages to be blindsided by the lack of morality found in those around him, most notably Daisy. Under the influence of dubious characters such as Dan Cody and Meyer Wolfsheim, Gatsby abandons the straight and narrow path and delves into crooked, shady methods to gain his wealth and prominence. Meyer Wolfsheim is a prime example of resorting to underhandedness for one’s own benefit, a tendency that is displayed by his life of crime and gambling. Nick is astounded to discover that Wolfsheim fixed- or rigged- the World Series, thinking, “It had never occurred to me that one man could start to play with the faith of fifty million people- with the single-mindedness of a burglar blowing a safe” (73). Meyer Wolfsheim is corrupt in every sense of the word, but, in his opinion, as long as he suffers no consequences there is nothing wrong with his

style of living. With his affluence and impenetrable air, it is no surprise that he has a transformative impact on Gatsby. Wolfsheim's influence rubs off on Gatsby, adulterating who once was a simple, upright boy and turning him into a full-fledged double dealer. It is later revealed that Gatsby's "business" very much resembled Wolfsheim's when Wolfsheim divulges, "Start [Gatsby]! I made him...I raised him up out of nothing, right out of the gutter...I knew I could use him" (171). Young Jay Gatsby, who was looking for opportunities, proved to be highly impressionable, and thus "mentors," such as Wolfsheim, wasted no time in turning Gatsby into an instrument for their benefit. Gatsby is given the idea that it is okay to utilize questionable methods as long as he comes out on top. Although Gatsby is not much of a poster boy himself, he and Nick are both taken aback by the corruption and self-centeredness that Daisy exhibits in the end. While Daisy may appear devoted to Gatsby, she retreats into the safety of her wealth and abandons him when her life begins to crumble. After Myrtle Wilson's death, Gatsby is more than willing to support Daisy, but "[Gatsby] waited, and about four o'clock she came to the window and stood there for a minute and then turned out the light" (147). By virtually turning her back on Gatsby, Daisy proves that she values comfort over moral action, and her betrayal is like a knife wound in Gatsby's heart. Gatsby fails to realize that Daisy appreciates security over true love, making her turn to Tom in times of crisis. When Daisy does not show or even send a note to Gatsby's funeral, Nick is disgusted by her shallowness and egomania. Nick is saddened and appalled by the Buchanans' lack of moral fiber, and he concludes that "they were careless people...they smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness...and let other people clean up the mess they had made" (179). Despite all of the glamour that Gatsby surrounds her with, Daisy turns out to be incredibly human. She

chases the glistening jewels on the horizon, always wanting more and giving less, without paying heed to the consequences her actions have on others. Corruption, a pervasive force in the life of Jay Gatsby, creates flaws in characters that prove to be fatal weaknesses, leading to the tragedy of the novel.

In the end, neither Gatsby's hard work nor his money can deliver him from his fate, and the failure of his dream deals the blow that destroys him. Throughout the novel, Gatsby's wealth has been his pedestal, giving him an appearance of grandeur and elevation. In the end, however, his fortune does nothing to save him from his impoverished grim reaper. In an ironic stroke, Gatsby, who has achieved prosperity, is murdered by George Wilson, who, despite all of his efforts, has been given to a life of hardship. This proves that no amount of wealth can remove a person from the path of retribution. When George Wilson, a poor auto mechanic, loses his wife and suspects Gatsby, nothing can stop him from having his revenge, and he "was reduced to a man 'deranged by grief'" (164) and pursuing revenge. Gatsby's hard-earned lucre fails to rescue him when his world comes undone. It proves to be nothing more than a transient veil, separating him from others for a time, but doing nothing to shield him from his destruction. Gatsby's wealth gives his life a facade of shining, enticing bliss; but in reality he falls apart, revealing the mortality and vulnerability that lurks behind his veneer. Gatsby's affluence does not serve to protect him. Instead, it acts to highlight his ruin, and "as Gatsby's disillusion becomes felt at the end it strikes like a chime through the mind...Only those who have lived by Gatsby's great illusion, by the tinsel and the glamour, can feel the terrible force of self-betrayal" (Kazin 30). Gatsby's kingdom has fallen with him trapped inside, unable to escape his inevitable destruction. His treasures hold no value as he faces death, and Fitzgerald emphasizes the worthlessness of

money in times of need as Gatsby dies surrounded by his fortune. Gatsby's entire life has been spent in pursuit of his dream, and when it proves to be flawed and corrupt the foundation of his existence is crushed. Daisy's duplicity leaves Gatsby untethered to any form of hope, and in the wake of the loss of his only desire he finds himself swamped in despair and lacking assurance. Daisy was Gatsby's life, and, without any hope of having her to himself, "he must have felt that he had lost the old warm world, paid a high price for living too long with a single dream" (Fitzgerald 161). To Gatsby, losing Daisy is synonymous to losing his life. His dream causes the death of Myrtle Wilson, dies itself, and then came full circle with the murder of Gatsby. Gatsby learns the hard way that no one, not even those with seemingly ceaseless charm and abundant wealth, can relive the past, and therefore Gatsby's life can be characterized as a futile struggle to obtain what has been lost. Gatsby's existence is propelled by his dream, but, as Nick observes, "He did not know that it was already behind him...Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgastic future that year by year recedes before us...So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past" (180). Gatsby's biggest failure is the fact that he is unable to recognize that what he wants is irretrievable. The Daisy of the past is gone, and in her place is a more materialistically-minded woman who will leave him if it saves herself. The Gatsby of the past is also gone, replaced by a man who has built himself on an eroding foundation destined to crumble. Gatsby's destruction is born of his dream's desolation, and all of his wealth and power are impotent against his oncoming ruin.

In *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald, Jay Gatsby turns to wealth with the goal of fulfilling his consuming dream, but moral corruption and change cause his wish to become flawed and unreliable. Gatsby's past with Daisy indirectly destroys him by proving to be

unattainable in its desired form, despite all of Gatsby's efforts to demonstrate otherwise. All of the intrigue and enticement that surround Gatsby's dream fall away when time and fraudulence adulterate what once was, in Gatsby's mind, perfect. Gatsby's downfall is that his eyes are always focused on his dream for the future and his memory of the past, causing him to miss the reality of his surroundings and the true nature of people, including himself. Gatsby's mind abandons his present, but it is the present that counts and that one holds power over. Therefore, as Buddha said, "Do not dwell in the past, do not dream of the future, concentrate the mind on the present moment."

#### Works Cited

Fitzgerald, F. Scott. *The Great Gatsby*. Charles Scribner's Sons, 2004.

Kazin, Alfred. "Gatsby and the Failure of the American Dream." *F. Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby Bloom's Notes*. Ed. Harold Bloom. Chelsea House Publishers, 1996. 30-31.

• edited to reflect 8th Edition MLA Standards

#### IV. Common Correction Symbols

abb	abbreviation
agr	agreement error with either subject/verb or pronoun/antecedent
ap	apostrophe
awk	awkward
cap/lc	need to capitalize a letter/need to lower case a letter
case	case of noun or pronoun is wrong
chop	choppy: too many short sentences together
cliché	a worn-out phrase that is overused
coh	cohesion: not logically or understandably stated
cont	avoid contractions in formal writing
cs	comma splice
dev	lacks development
ds	double space
Ed.	editor
FE/fact	factual error
frag	fragment/non-sentence
ital	use italics/incorrect use of italics
K	awkward syntax
MLA	Modern Library Association
nw	not a word
p	punctuation usage (error or omission)
plot/ps	plot summary; not enough solid discussion or analysis
pv	inappropriate personal voice/point of view
quo	quotations marks (error or omission)
red	redundant: idea has already been stated in another way
ref	reference is vague/unclear
rep	repetitious: statement or idea has been made previously
R-O	run-on sentence that needs correct punctuation
sl	avoid slang in formal writing
sp	incorrect spelling
ss	single space
T	thesis statement
ts	topic sentence
trans	transition needed
vt	problems with verb tense
wc	poor word choice
wordy	wordy
ww	wrong word used



## V. Errors Resulting in Major Deductions

All major errors are taught and then reviewed annually in grades six through twelve. At the upper school level, ninth grade incorporates both specific grammar lessons as well as intentional review within the process of critical writing. Tenth through twelfth grades concentrate mechanics review within the process of formal critical writing.

### Fragment

A fragment is an incomplete sentence starting with a capital and ending with a period. Fragments can lack a subject or verb or both subject and verb. A fragment *can* have a subject and verb but be an incomplete thought. Ex: adverb clause

In each of the examples below, the sentence is written first, and the fragment is written in italics.

- The newspaper staff worked late. *Putting out a special edition.*  
*correct:* The newspapers staff worked late putting out a special edition.
- We looked forward to meeting Ms. Cox. *Our new teacher.*  
*correct:* We looked forward to meeting Ms. Cox, our new teacher.
- *As the horses neared the gate.* The excitement increased.  
*correct:* As the horses neared the gate, the excitement increased.

### Run-on

A run-on sentence consists of two or more sentences separated by only by a comma or by no mark of punctuation.

- Romare Bearden is a prominent artist his collage is in the museum.  
*correct:* Romare Bearden is a noted artist. His collage is in the museum.  
*correct:* Romare Bearden is a noted artist, and his collage is in the museum.  
*correct:* Romare Bearden is a noted artist; his collage is in the museum.

### Subject/verb agreement

When a word refers to one person, place, thing or idea, it is singular in number. When a word refers to more than one, it is plural. A verb agrees with its subject in number. The number of a subject is not changed by a prepositional phrase following the subject.

- The following pronouns are singular and require a singular verb: *each, either, neither, one, everyone, everybody, no one, nobody, anyone, anybody, someone, somebody.*
- The following pronouns are plural and require a plural verb: *both, few, several, many.*
- The words *some, any, all, none and most* may be either singular or plural, and the verb should agree with the number of the pronoun as it is used.

## **Punctuation**

Some more common errors in punctuation are these:

- A comma splice is two independent clauses separated by only a comma instead of a semicolon or a period.
- To form the possessive case of a plural noun ending in s, add only the apostrophe. Do not use an apostrophe to form the plural of a word; the apostrophe shows ownership or relationship, not number.

## **Capitalization**

Capitalize names of specific people, places, and things. Do not capitalize names of school subject (unless derived from a proper noun or followed by a number.)

The case for hypocrisy with the **Putnams** is a valid one in the play.

The **seniors** are planning to raise money for the service project.

My **American history** class is across the hall from my **Algebra II** class.

## **Pronouns**

In formal writing, students should use only third person pronouns. The third person pronouns are as follows: *she, her, he, him, it, them, they*. Avoid the use of first person pronouns (*I, me, we, us*) and second person pronouns (*you*).

## **Contractions**

A contraction uses an apostrophe to show where some letters have been omitted in a contraction. (is not = isn't). *Contractions should be eliminated from formal writing.*

*NOTE:* The word *its* is a pronoun in the possessive case. It does not have an apostrophe. The word *it's* is a contraction of it is or it has and requires an apostrophe.

## **Factual error**

Doublecheck spelling of names, places, events, and other details about plot; factual errors are not acceptable.

## **Documentation**

See examples on pages 20-21 of this Handbook. Note the rule for correct end punctuation with parentheses.

## **Tense shift**

Avoid changing the tense of a verb within a sentence.

After we were comfortable, we begin to do homework.

*correct:* After we were comfortable, we began to do homework

## VI. Glossary of Literary Terms

A glossary of some major literary terms is included for two reasons: first, to supply concise explanations of a short list of terms central to the critical study of literature; second, to enable you to know quickly and use correctly these specialized terms of literary thinking and writing.

- Allegory*** A representation of an abstract or spiritual meaning through concrete or material details.
- Allusion*** A brief reference to a historical or literary figure, event, or object that enriches or deepens the meaning of a work of literature.
- Antagonist*** The character (or force) in fiction or drama that stands directly opposed to or pitted against the protagonist. An antagonist may be another person, a social or physical force, or a destructive element in the protagonist's own personality.
- Archetype*** The original pattern or model of which all things of the same type are copied or on which they are based; a prototype.
- Aside*** A part of an actor's lines supposedly not heard by others on stage and intended only for the audience to hear.
- Catastrophe*** A point in a drama at which the circumstances overcome the central motive, introducing the close, conclusion, or denouement.
- Character*** An imaginary or fictional person of drama, short stories, or novels. While an author imbues his fictional character with a specific personality or attributes, he also may present that character as a broad type of human being: dynamic, static, round, flat, stock, or foil, for example.
- Climax*** The highest or most intense point in the development or resolution of something; a culmination; a decisive moment that is often the turning point in a plot.
- Comedy*** A light form of drama that primarily aims to expose human weakness or folly, to amuse, and to end happily. Unlike tragedy, the characters of comedies are not noble or lofty figures. Rather, they are good, though ordinary, even low-cast human beings whose weaknesses and limitations are revealed or ridiculed in amusing social situations. While comedy is the entertaining spectacle of people's limitations and frailties, it is essentially

critical and corrective. Still, its primary function is to amuse or entertain the audience.

- Conflict*** A clash or struggle between two opposing forces or characters in drama or fiction. This struggle may be outward physical strife or an inward moral or psychological dilemma.
- Denouement*** The final outcome or resolution of a plot that resolves or “unknots” all of the threads of conflict, mystery, or intrigue in a work of fiction or drama.
- Epigraph*** An inscription, especially on a building, statue, or the like; an apposite quotation at the beginning of a book, chapter, etc.
- Exposition*** Speech primarily intended to convey information or to explain; a detailed statement or explanation.
- Diction*** The choice of words and their use, particularly for clarity, effectiveness, and precision.
- Episodic*** Divided into separate or tenuously related parts or sections; loosely connected.
- Ethos*** An appeal to the speaker’s or the writer’s own credentials, ethics, education, and experience.
- Exciting force*** An initial action that changes the balance of the story and drives the plot in a new direction.
- Falling action*** The part of a literary plot that occurs after the climax has been reached and the conflict has been resolved.
- Flashback*** A scene in which the author of fiction, drama, or film shifts back to an earlier time and action in order to provide relevant past events or character traits.
- Foreshadowing*** The use of hints, clues, or mood to create interest and suspense and finally to suggest what will happen later.
- Hyperbole*** A figure of speech using exaggeration or overstatement for comic effect or, more seriously and ironically, to reveal truth.

**Imagery** The representation of sensory experience through descriptive or figurative language, especially language that appeals to the five senses. For example, if the imagery is visual, a writer creates images that suggest pictures to the mind's eye. In addition to the visual, an image may represent a sound, a smell, a touch, a taste, or a movement. Imagery is also the collective word for a group or cluster of images.

**Irony** A deliberate disparity or contrast between what is said and what is meant, or between what is expected to happen and what actually happens. At least three kinds of irony are used in literature:

**Verbal irony** The contrast between what is said and what is meant by a speaker's or writer's words.

**Dramatic irony** The contrast between what a character thinks to be true and what the reader or audience knows to be true.

**Irony of situation** The discrepancy between the expected results of an action or situation and the actual results.

### ***Literal and Figurative Language***

The word *literal* derives from the word *letter* and thus refers to the meaning conveyed by the standard definitions of the words. To talk about the literal meaning is to talk about the meaning at the surface of the work. Figurative language, on the other hand, intentionally departs from the literal or dictionary meaning of words. It employs vivid and imaginative comparison, description, contrast, or connotation. Metaphor, simile, oxymoron, personification, and antithesis are examples of figurative language.

**Metaphor** A figurative, implicit comparison between two essentially unlike things that nevertheless suggests a similarity between the two.

**Monologue** A form of dramatic entertainment, comedic solo, or the like by a single speaker; a prolonged talk or discourse by a single speaker, a part of a drama in which a single actor speaks alone.

**Mood** The atmosphere that pervades a literary work with the intention of evoking a certain emotion or feeling from the audience. In drama, mood may be created by sets and music as well as words; in poetry and prose, mood may be created by a combination of such elements as *setting*, *voice*, *tone* and *theme*.

<b><i>Oxymoron</i></b>	A figure of speech that combines opposite or contradictory words; a compact paradox.
<b><i>Paradox</i></b>	A seemingly contradictory statement that actually expresses a truth.
<b><i>Pathos</i></b>	An appeal to the audience's or reader's sense of emotion: sympathy, pity, anger, humor, nostalgia, etc.
<b><i>Personification</i></b>	A figure of speech in which something non-human is given human qualities or traits.
<b><i>Plot</i></b>	In a work of fiction, drama, or narrative poetry, the sequence of incidents or events shaped, according to Aristotle, as a beginning, middle, and end. Ancient dramatists compared plot to the tying and untying of a knot. Later, Freytag designated this sequence of events as pyramidal in shape and composed of five parts: exposition, rising action, climax (turning point), falling action, and denouement.
<b><i>Point of View</i></b>	The perspective or vantage point from which the author presents the actions of the story. There are three principal points of view: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b><i>First person POV</i></b>     The narrator tells the story in first person as a character in the story.</li> <li><b><i>Third person omniscient POV</i></b>     The narrator tells the story in third person and is an all-knowing observer, able to tell us not only what all the characters do, but also what they think and feel as well as why they act as they do.</li> <li><b><i>Third person limited POV</i></b>     The narrator tells the story in third person but limits himself to telling the story through the eyes, perspective, feelings, and thoughts of one character.</li> </ul>
<b><i>Protagonist</i></b>	In drama or fiction, the chief or central character who has the most at stake in the conflict; the leading character both in importance and in his ability to enlist our interest or sympathy.
<b><i>Resolution</i></b>	See <i>denouement</i> .
<b><i>Rising action</i></b>	A related series of incidents in a literary plot that builds toward the point of greatest interest.

<b><i>Rhetoric</i></b>	The effective use of words to inform or persuade.
<b><i>Ethos</i></b>	An appeal to the speaker's or writer's own credentials, ethics, education, and experience.
<b><i>Pathos</i></b>	An appeal to the audience's or reader's sense of emotion: sympathy, pity, anger, humor, nostalgia, etc.
<b><i>Logos</i></b>	An appeal to the audience's or reader's sense of logic or reason.
<b><i>Satire</i></b>	The use of irony, sarcasm, or the like, in exposing, denouncing, or deriding human vice or folly. In a literary composition, in verse or prose, human folly and vice are held up to scorn or ridicule.
<b><i>Setting</i></b>	The time and place in which the events of a work of fiction or drama take place; the general environment of the characters, including religious, mental, moral, social, and emotional conditions through which the characters move.
<b><i>Simile</i></b>	A figurative, explicit comparison between two apparently dissimilar things, using <i>like</i> , <i>as</i> , <i>as if</i> , <i>seems</i> , <i>than</i> , or <i>resembles</i> .
<b><i>Soliloquy</i></b>	An utterance or discourse by a person who is talking to himself disregarding the ability of anyone to hear him; the act of talking while or as if alone.
<b><i>Symbol</i></b>	An object, person, or action that both stands for itself and embodies an additional idea, meaning, or quality. Usually, understanding symbols requires the reader to move from the concrete object to its abstract meaning or association.
<b><i>Theme</i></b>	The central idea, dominant insight about life, or main topic in a literary work. An author may express theme through explicit propositions, but more often he subtly reveals his central idea or view of human experience through character, conflict, setting, imagery, or symbol.
<b><i>Tone</i></b>	The attitude a writer takes toward his subject, characters, or audience; the emotional coloring or emotional meaning the author gives his literary piece.
<b><i>Tragedy</i></b>	In drama, a play in verse or prose that depicts the downfall of a protagonist who is noble and elevated in status yet moves from happiness to misery because of an error in judgment or a character flaw. A revelation

of human strivings and aspirations, tragedy arouses fear and pity, yet its purpose is to celebrate the courage and dignity of the human spirit in the face of defeat.

***Tragic Flaw***

The character defect that causes the downfall of the protagonist.