



High School  
Writing  
Handbook  
Grades 9-12  
*4<sup>th</sup> Edition*

**Cornerstone Christian Academy**  
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**Grades 9-12**

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**\*\*Research Paper – Because this is such a specialized type of writing, instructions will be provided in class**

## Writing Curriculum Overview

The purpose of this curriculum is to align our teaching standards, expectations, and assessments of writing from K-12<sup>th</sup>. This type of alignment is instrumental in creating solid, well-rounded, complete writers. Following an organized and consistent method for teaching writing has three main purposes. The first is to create a unified approach to writing, so all grade levels are working toward the same goals/outcomes. No more guessing if previous grade levels have done a persuasive paper, it's clear that it is introduced in 4<sup>th</sup>, while further, more challenging dimensions are added subsequently in middle school and high school. It is not necessary to introduce or teach each paper type every year. This overview not only simplifies teaching practices but also provides direction. The second purpose of unifying the approach to writing in grades K-12 is to eliminate student frustration. Anytime curriculum is viewed in isolation from year to year, students suffer most. Utilizing common story maps/outlines, writing guidelines, and rubrics in each grade level greatly simplifies the writing process. Students don't have to learn new practices each year. Instead, they may simply progress from grade to grade, building upon what was previously taught. The third reason for unifying our approach to writing is to have a record of student progression over the years. This issue will be discussed further in the portfolio and rubric sections.

## Portfolio Explanation

The following page is a graphic organizer specifying the writing expectations at Cornerstone Christian Academy for grades 9-12. These outcomes represent what papers are placed into each student's portfolio at all grade levels. It, by no means, limits teachers from having other writing assignments throughout the year. In fact, this is encouraged in the form of journal and reflective writing, which is far less formal. The more students write, the more comfortable and experienced they become with the task. Collecting the same samples from all students provides consistency in measuring student growth and progress.

Each student has an individual portfolio, which is used to accumulate samples throughout the each students' education. Ideally, portfolios are meant to accomplish a few different things: monitor and track individual student progress, clearly communicate that growth to students, parents, teachers and administrators, and serve as a means with which to evaluate the overall curriculum design and implementation. In other words, viewing various grade level samples of student work show how well students are mastering and applying various writing or grammatical technique. For example, the best way to judge how well figurative language is being taught is to examine its representation and usage in student papers.

English teachers keep all student portfolios for the year. The paper and the rubric used for assessment are entered in the portfolio. Once the year is complete, the portfolios follow the students to the next grade level. Portfolios are used to communicate progress to parents.

# Cornerstone Christian Academy

## Portfolio Writing Samples

Grades 9-12

2012-2013

### Paper Types and Number of Samples per Year Collected for the Writing Portfolio

Grade	Opinion- (All English Papers)	Informative (based upon Unit Essential Questions)	Narrative	Biblical Analysis	Research (using and citing primary/second ary sources)	Informal Writing Samples
9th	2 Literature Critiques 1 Persuasive 1 Agree/Disagree	2 Science 2 History ( 1 per semester)	1 English	1 English		2-3 per semester (all classes)
10th	2 Literature Critiques 1 Persuasive (English) 1 Agree/Disagree	2 Science 2 History (1 per semester)	1 English	1 English		2-3 per semester (all classes)
11th	1 Literature Critiques 1 Persuasive (English) 1 Agree/Disagree	2 Science 2 History (1 per semester)	1 English	1 English	1 traditional research paper – English (in collaboration w/ History) (5-8 pp)	2-3 per semester (all classes)
12th	1 Literature Critiques 1 Persuasive 1 Agree/Disagree	2 Science 2 History (1 per semester)	1 English	1 English	1 traditional research paper – English (5-8 pp)	2-3 per semester (all classes)

All papers, unless otherwise specified, should be 2-4 pages, double-spaced, 12-point, Times New Roman font. All papers should follow MLA formatting, which is specified on the following two pages. They should be typed and submitted to the portfolio with a rubric attached. Please see Definition of Paper Types, Writing Process, and Story Maps (in Writing Curriculum Handbook) and Cornerstone Christian Academy Literacy Standards (by grade level) for clarification of guidelines on each paper type.

Student's Name

Instructor's Name

Course Title

16 July 2013

Heading: double  
spaced; follow  
order and date  
format exactly

Header: include  
student's last  
name and the  
page # of the  
essay (insert)

Title:  
centered; no  
bold,  
underline, or  
italics unless  
the title of a  
book is  
included

Essay Title

Paragraph:  
1 tab for  
the first  
line of  
each new  
paragraph

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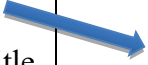
Block quote: used  
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Works Cited:  
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Cited” without  
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MLA requires double spacing  
throughout the document. CCA  
also requires Times New Roman  
12 point font.

### Works Cited

Author’s Last Name, Author’s First Name. *Book Title is Italicized not Underlined*. City  
Name: Publisher, Date. Print.

MLA now  
requires all  
sources to  
have a  
publication  
marker;  
books  
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Bartusiak, Mauris. Pellentesque . Cras porttitor felis eu semper sodales: Risus Curabiyur

Fringilla Venenatis, 1993

Caoreet Venenatis, Egestas A. Mari. Sociosqu netus semper: A Faucibus Luctus Auctor


Condimentum, 1993. 115.

Destibulum, Ipsum R. “Morbi Auctor: A Sodales.” Interdum. Quisque.

2000: 46

“Historical Census Browser.” *University of Virginia Library*. 2007. Web. 6  
Dec. 2008.

MLA no longer  
requires URLs in the  
Works Cited; use the  
publication marker  
“Web” before the  
date of access



## Writing Process

This is the model to structure formal paper-writing. The teacher will guide students through this process. Students should only be on their own with this process when they are very familiar with the particular paper type.

### Writing Process:

1. “Power write” - Start with an informal ‘power write’. Give students a broad topic that all are familiar with, like winter. Set a timer for 2-3 minutes. Students are to use this time to write down as many words that ‘pop’ into their mind. It’s a good idea to review the different parts of speech briefly before doing this, like adjectives, adverbs, nouns, verbs, etc. For older grades, you may even remind them of the most recent figurative language you’ve discussed, like similes, for example. This is free-writing time. Some students jot down series of words, while some choose to start forming sentences or mini stories. Anything is acceptable. The purpose is to start the free flow of ideas. This can also be a journal writing activity. A brief journal entry or question about a previous day’s lesson are also good ideas for ‘Power Write’.
2. Introduce IEW Strategy – See the IEW writing techniques to see what is expected at each grade level. These are the same strategies that teachers are looking for while assessing papers. All of the techniques/strategies are taught and reviewed according to the chart. Reviewing these writing skills ensures that students know how they are assessed with each paper.
3. Complete the Outline – Good writing starts with an organized outline. Depending on how familiar students are with the particular type of writing, this may be teacher-led, partner work, or done individually. No matter what stage a writer is at, the teacher refreshes students on outlines and how to complete them. Please see the explanation on the purpose of outlines/story maps and how to use them.
4. Write the first draft - Students are ready to create a first draft using the story map/outline. Students are reminded that each Roman Numeral on the outline represents one paragraph. Similarly, each box on a story map represents one paragraph. Students generate papers



using a computer. Remind students again of IEW strategies. Students should use the rubric to guide in the paper-writing process.

5. Edit - Once the first draft is complete, it is time to edit. Students need to be sure that they have incorporated the proper IEW techniques. Students can print out a hard copy and self-edit or edit with parent. Both are recommended.
6. Final paper - Once the paper has been edited, print out the final draft for submission.

## Description of Paper Types

### Cornerstone Christian Academy

Cornerstone Christian Academy strives to maintain a comprehensive approach to writing, beginning at Kindergarten. Our standards are aligned with the Common Core State Standards. The following is a brief description of the basic paper types that are taught at Cornerstone. Writing procedures are consistent from elementary to secondary. The only difference includes the complexity of the topic and the expanded development of said topic. We believe that this consistency produces confident and capable writers.

Narrative- tells a story. Students must have the elements of plot present- characters, setting, rising action, crisis, climax, falling action, and resolution. All grade levels will do various versions of this paper type with the lower grades starting with simplified versions. The paper continues to get more complex in high school.

Opinion – Agree/Disagree - A critical aspect in the reading/thinking/writing process, is to be able to investigate/read about a topic or author’s viewpoint, critically analyze the ideas being expressed, form your own thoughts in relation to the new information learned, and then be able articulate your opinion on the topic. Opinion papers are such an important part of the CCA writing process, because everything we study must be examined from the Christian Worldview. In this society, we are bombarded with so many conflicting viewpoints (from that of the Bible). It is an invaluable tool to train children to be critical thinkers in examining all information that they take in.

Opinion - Persuasive- persuades a specified audience on a given topic. A good example would be: “ You are a fourth grade student; write a letter persuading your principal to let your class have an extra 10 minutes of recess a day.” Students are taught to create three great arguments that would win the audience over to their side. In this case, the students would be trying to win over the principal. Understanding the audience is a pivotal part of this writing, as proper arguments need to be tailored to ‘win’ that side over to the writer’s line of reasoning.

Opinion – Literature Critique- used to analyze a literary piece. Areas examined are characters, setting, theme, climax, conflict, and mood. Students will voice their own opinion in the conclusion of this paper, stating (without using the word ‘I’) whether they enjoyed the story or not.

Informative-conveys complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content. Informative essays fully explain why something is as it is or how something comes about. It makes a point about a subject, problem, issue, or question. It generally requires some research on a topic in order to develop a refined understanding before analysis. Attention to support details is crucial.

Biblical Analysis- take one book of the book of the Bible and fully analyze it’s meaning, context, themes, and implications for current understanding. Students writing this paper will have an opportunity to explain what this book means to their lives.

Informative Research- focus on refining research skills, organizing information in a logical format, and utilizing proper citations. In the lower grades, this type of paper is done as a whole class, small group, or in partners. Research topics and depth of analysis are also greatly simplified. Traditional Research Papers with footnoting and quotes are reserved for upper high school.

## Paper Outlines

One of the keys to a consistent approach to writing is using the same method in each grade level to create a paper, no matter what type of writing it is. Many students, as well as adults, do not like to write. One main reason for this is the lack of consistent guidelines and expectations. Not to mention, students do not know where to begin, which is where story outlines come in. Using outlines provide great structure and organization. They also help students understand how to create a paragraph – where does it start, when does it end? This is a very ambiguous aspect of writing that even stumps adults. Students are taught that each section of the outline represents one paragraph. When done discussing the items in section, the paragraph is complete.

Copies can be generated of these story outlines as students are new to these paper types. After that, they are simple to construct, and students should think of them as being able to recreate on a ‘scratch’ piece of paper at anytime. An example when this would come in handy is while taking any standardized test where writing is assessed. An outline will not be available for them, but a student will realize he or she could simply create one. No ready-made form is needed. Until students are really confident with a paper type, they may be prompted on what information goes in each area.

# **Narrative Outline**

## **6<sup>th</sup>-12th Grade**

### **Story Title**

#### **I. Setting & Characters**

1. When and where does the story take place?
2. Describe the setting & communicate the mood (bright, dark, mysterious, humorous, solemn, suspenseful, scary, peaceful, chaotic...)
3. Describe the characters (include their thoughts and emotions)

#### **II. Rising Action**

1. This is where the main conflict begins
2. What are characters doing, saying, feeling?
3. What events happened before the main conflict?

#### **III. Conflict – highest point of action in plot**

1. What is the problem, want, or need?
2. What happens?
3. What do the characters do, say, think and feel?

#### **IV. Falling Action and Resolution**

1. What leads to the problem being solved or the need being met?
2. What is the end result?

#### **V. Conclusion and Theme**

1. Theme/Moral: What was learned?
2. Be sure to answer all unanswered questions.
3. Final Clincher: repeat 2–3 key words in your title

# **Narrative Outline**

## **6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Grade (Student Copy)**

**Story Title**

### **I. Setting & Characters**

1.

2.

3.

### **II. Rising Action**

1.

2.

3.

### **III. Conflict – highest point of action in plot**

1.

2.

3.

### **IV. Falling Action and Resolution**

1.

2.

### **V. Conclusion and Theme**

1.

2.

3.

## **Informative/Research 6th-12th Grade**

Five Paragraphs

### **Title of Essay**

#### **I. Introduction**

Grab Attention

Introduce subject & background information

State three topics

#### **II. Topic Sentence A**

Find 5 items about subject, including details, example, facts, explanation of topic

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Good closing sentence, summing up topic of essay

#### **III. Topic Sentence B**

Find 5 items about subject, including details, example, facts, explanation of topic

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Good closing sentence, summing up topic of essay

#### **IV. Topic Sentence C**

Find 5 items about subject, including details, example, facts, explanation of topic

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Good closing sentence, summing up topic of essay

#### **IV. Conclusion**

Restate three topics

Most significant and WHY

Final closing sentence (reflect opening and title)

## **Informative/Research 6th-12th Grade (Student Copy)**

Five Paragraphs

**Title of Essay**

### **I. Introduction**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

### **II. Topic Sentence A -**

Find 5 items about subject, including details, example, facts, explanation of topic

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Good closing sentence, summing up topic of essay

### **III. Topic Sentence B -**

Find 5 items about subject, including details, example, facts, explanation of topic

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Good closing sentence, summing up topic of essay

### **IV. Topic Sentence C -**

Find 5 items about subject, including details, example, facts, explanation of topic

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Good closing sentence, summing up topic of essay

### **IV. Conclusion**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



## **Opinion/Agree or Disagree**

### **4th-12th Grade**

Four Paragraphs

#### **Title of Essay**

#### **I. Introduction**

1. Give background on what the story was about
2. Include title and author

#### **II. Major Theme of Story**

List the main points that the author is trying to teach in this story/article.  
Do not express your opinions here at all. Just state the author's ideas.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

#### **III. Agree or Disagree**

Now that you have stated what the author's points are, decide if you agree or disagree and give details to support why.

Opening sentence – agree or disagree with author

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

1. Sum up main points of author the author.
2. Sum up main points of why you agree/disagree.

# **Opinion/Agree or Disagree**

## **4th-12th Grade (Student Copy)**

Four Paragraphs

**Title of Essay -**

### **I. Introduction**

1.

2.

### **II. Major Theme of Story**

List the main points that the author is trying to teach in this story/article.

Do not express your opinions here at all. Just state the author's ideas.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

### **III. Agree or Disagree**

Now that you have stated what the author's points are, decide if you agree or disagree and give details to support why.

Opening sentence – agree or disagree with author

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

### **IV. Conclusion**

1.

2.

## **Opinion/Critique**

### **4th-12th Grade**

Four Paragraphs

#### **Title of Essay**

#### **I. Introduction/Characters/Setting**

Introduce book –title, author, and type of story (i.e. historical fiction, fantasy). Discuss and give details of people or animals in the story, place and time, and mood

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

#### **II. Conflict/Plot**

Detail the problem(s) that must be solved. Discuss the plan of the story.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

#### **III. Climax/Theme**

Discuss the turning point of the story, message about life

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

Liked? Why? Disliked? Why? Never use I.

# **Opinion/Critique**

## **4th-12th Grade (Student Copy)**

Four Paragraphs

**Title of Essay**

### **I. Introduction/Characters/Setting**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

### **II. Conflict/Plot**

Detail the problem(s) that must be solved. Discuss the plan of the story.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

### **III. Climax/Theme**

Discuss the turning point of the story, message about life

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

### **IV. Conclusion**

Liked? Why? Disliked? Why? Never use I.

## Opinion/Persuasive 6th-12th Grade

Five Paragraphs

### Title of Essay

#### I. Introduction

Background Information

State 3 arguments

Writer's opinion is clearly stated

#### II. Topic Sentence A- (#2) 2<sup>nd</sup> most compelling argument

Find 4 items about subject, including details, example, facts, explanation of topic

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Good closing sentence, summing up topic of essay

#### III. Topic Sentence B- (#3) 3<sup>rd</sup> most compelling argument

Find 4 items about subject, including details, example, facts, explanation of topic

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Good closing sentence, summing up topic of essay

#### IV. Topic Sentence C- (#1) most compelling argument

Find 4 items about subject, including details, example, facts, explanation of topic

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Good closing sentence, summing up topic of essay

#### IV. Conclusion

Restate three opinions

Final closing sentence restating opinion

**Opinion/Persuasive  
6th-12th Grade (Student Copy)**

Five Paragraphs

**Title of Essay**

**I. Introduction**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**II. Topic Sentence A- #2-**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

**III. Topic Sentence B- #3-**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

**IV. Topic Sentence C- #1-**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

**V. Conclusion**

- 1.
- 2.

# **Biblical Analysis**

## **Grades 7-12**

### **Title of Essay**

#### **I. Introduction**

1. Book of Bible, OT or NT
2. Author
3. Date written
4. To whom was it written (or intended for)
5. Location (if applicable)

#### **II. Theme 1**

Discuss major theme and provide details and implications.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

#### **III. Theme 2**

Discuss major theme and provide details and implications.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

#### **IV. Theme 3 or Identify any major conflicts**

Discuss and provide details and implications

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

#### **V. Conclusion/Reflection**

1. Summarize main themes/conflicts and provide the point of each
2. Reflect on what the teachings of this book mean to you

# **Biblical Analysis**

## **Grades 7-12 (Student Copy)**

### **Title of Essay**

#### **I. Introduction**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

#### **II. Theme 1**

Discuss major theme and provide details and implications.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

#### **III. Theme 2**

Discuss major theme and provide details and implications.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

#### **IV. Theme 3 or Identify any major conflicts**

Discuss and provide details and implications

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

#### **V. Conclusion/Reflection**

- 1.
- 2.



## Focus Control Areas

The consistent use of outlines and similar writing instruction is crucial for great writing. Another important aspect is teaching writing techniques. The term Focus Control Area (FCA) means that students are to place a high emphasis of their attention on ‘perfecting’ these aspects of their writing, mostly because they have just been intensively been studying them in other areas of English. FCAs are vertically aligned from grades K-12 at CCA. Vertical alignment is designed so that students are continuously building upon their skills in incremental steps, without duplication or gaps. The teacher adds new areas gradually that have not been covered yet. FCAs come from lessons and concepts that are being taught in other areas of language areas as well, such as spelling, grammar, and reading. Writing is most effective when it is taught as a part of the entire English program. The following pages should be used to constantly tweak and enhance writing.

## Overview of IEW (Institute for Excellence in Writing) Skills by Grade Level

<b>Grade</b>	<b>K</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>5<sup>th</sup></b>
<b>IEW skill to be reviewed</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	Strong verbs -ly words quality adjectives	Strong verbs -ly words quality adjectives Who/which clause Because clause	Who/which clause Because clause Adverb clause ( <a href="http://WWW.ASIA">WWW.ASIA</a> ) to create complex sentence
<b>Skills that should be mastered at this grade</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Strong verbs -ly words quality adjectives	Who/which clause Because clause
<b>IEW skills to be introduced</b>	Focusing on writing complete sentences	Focusing on writing complete sentences and writing process	Strong verbs -ly words quality adjectives	Who/which clause Because clause	Adverb clause ( <a href="http://WWW.ASIA">WWW.ASIA</a> ) to create complex sentences	-ly openers  Prepositional openers

Grade	6 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup> - 12 <sup>th</sup>
<b>IEW skill to be reviewed</b>	Adverb clause ( <a href="#">WWW.ASIA</a> ) to create complex sentences -ly openers Prepositional openers	-ly openers Prepositional openers Sentence openers: ing, clausal, vss Decorations: conversation/quotations, alliteration, simile-metaphor	Decorations: Questions, 3 sss (short staccato sentences), dramatic opening-closing  Introduce Triple Extensions: word repetition, phrase and clausal repetition	All sentence openers and decorations.  Triple Extensions: word repetition, phrase and clausal repetition, repeating –ings, repeating –lys, repeating adjectives or nouns, repeating verbs	N/A
<b>Skills that should be mastered at this grade</b>	Adverb clause ( <a href="#">WWW.ASIA</a> ) to create complex sentences	-ly openers Prepositional openers	Sentence openers: ing, clausal, vss Decorations: conversation/quotations, alliteration, simile-metaphor	Sentence openers and decorations. Triple Extensions	All skills should be mastered and being used in writing
<b>IEW skills to be introduced</b>	Sentence openers: ing, clausal, vss  Introduce – decorations : conversation/quotations, alliteration, simile-metaphor	Decorations: Questions, 3 sss (short staccato sentences), dramatic opening-closing  Introduce Triple Extensions: word repetition, phrase and clausal repetition	Triple extensions: Repeating –ings, repeating –lys, repeating adjectives or nouns, repeating verbs.	Advanced dressups and openers : dual adverbs, strong verbs, and dual adjectives	Adverbial and adjectival teeter totters  -ed opener

## **Dress Ups:**

1. **Strong verbs**- strong verbs are action verbs that give a more information or are more descriptive. They can replace banned words, be synonyms for words that are used repeatedly in a paper or paragraph, or just a very descriptive verb.
2. **-ly adverbs**- these are adverbs that end in ly and tell how (or when) something was done. This is another way to paint a better picture for your reader.
3. **Quality adjective** - these are more descriptive adjectives that are used to describe nouns in writing. They can replace banned words, or can be added to paper to create a better description.
4. **Who/which or that clauses** – this is an adjective clause that is used to describe a noun and add variety to sentences.

**Example:** Mrs. Burrow is the 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher. Mrs. Burrow likes Dr. Pepper.

Mrs. Burrow, who is the 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, likes Dr. Pepper.

5. **WWW.ASIA clauses, because clauses, and advanced clauses** – are subordinate or adverb clauses that help create complex sentences and add variety to students sentences. WWW.ASIA begin with **where, when, while, as, since, if, although**, because clause begins with **because**, other subordinate clauses begin with **unless, before, after**.

**Example:** Sara worked on her homework. She went to swim lessons.

After Sara worked on her homework, she went to swim lessons.

Sara worked on her homework until she went to swim lessons.

## **Sentence Openers:**

1. **Subject opener-**
2. **Prepositional opener** – Sentence begins with a prepositional phrase which is separated with a comma.
  - a. Example: In the morning, we left for our trip.
3. **-ly opener:** Sentence begins with an adverb which is followed by a comma.
  - a. Example: Suddenly, the dog began barking at the people passing on the street.
4. **-ing phrase:** Sentence begins with phrase beginning with a –ing verb.
  - a. Example: Sitting on the bench, Tommy waited for the bus to arrive.
5. **www.asia phrase:** Sentence beginning with a subordinate clause that begins in where, while, when, as, since, if, although.
  - a. Example: As the boys ran into the house, it began to rain.
6. **Very short sentences:** Using two or three short sentences for dramatic impact.
  - a. Example: It was dark. It was cold. It was late. OR She shouted. She screamed. She cried.

## **Banned Word list with suggested strong verbs or quality adjectives:**

### **GO/WENT & COME/CAME (strong verb suggested replacements)**

#### **A slow or relaxed pace:**

amble  
coast  
crawl  
drift  
drudge  
journey  
lag  
lumber  
lurch  
meander  
mosey  
plod  
sashay  
saunter  
shuffle  
slither  
stride  
stroll  
trudge  
waltz

#### **In a certain direction:**

advance  
ascend  
descend  
plummet  
plunge  
proceed  
progress  
retreat  
sink  
surge  
sweep  
swoop  
take off  
veer  
zig zag

#### **To leave:**

depart  
exit

flee

#### **In a clumsy way:**

blunder  
burst  
careen  
charge  
shuffle  
stagger  
stumble  
topple  
trip  
tumble

#### **In a hurry or loud:**

bolt  
burst  
dart  
dash  
fly  
glide  
hurry  
hustle  
jolt  
leap  
plow  
race  
rocket  
rush  
scamper  
scuttle  
sprint  
storm  
strut  
thump  
trot  
whirl  
whisk  
whiz  
whoosh

zoom

#### **In a quiet way:**

creep  
sneak  
tip toe

#### **In a fun happy way:**

bounce  
bound  
flutter  
glide  
leap  
prance  
soar  
twirl  
whirl

#### **In a specific way:**

climb  
dive  
drive  
float  
flock  
flop  
flounder  
fly  
gallop  
wormed  
parade  
pivot  
ripple  
sail  
soar  
slither  
swerve  
tour

#### **Other:**

continue  
cross  
follow  
forge

maneuver  
stream  
trail

travel  
trample  
trek

wander

**Say/said**  
**(strong verb suggested replacements)**

**When angry or disagree:**

accuse  
admonish  
blast  
challenge  
charge  
chide  
deny  
denounce  
disagree  
dispute  
contest  
contradict  
debated  
deny  
fume  
grumble  
insult  
jeer  
lash out  
object  
oppose  
protest  
rant  
rave  
rebuke  
refute  
ridicule  
roar  
scoff  
scold  
scowl  
screech  
shout  
shriek  
snap  
snarl  
sneer  
snicker

tattle  
taunt  
tease  
threaten  
thunder  
vent  
yell

**To agree with someone or  
give in:**

acknowledge  
affirm  
agree  
chorus  
concede  
concur  
confirm  
echo  
sigh  
swear

**Specific Situation:**

apologize  
complain  
confess  
echo  
flatter  
greet  
echo  
lie  
pant  
pledge  
pray

**To beg someone:**

plead  
beg  
beseech  
bargain  
scold

sing  
stammer  
stutter  
urge

**Ask questions:**

inquired  
interrogate  
query  
question  
quiz

**To give information:**

add  
admit  
advise  
boast  
cite  
commented  
confide  
declare  
decree  
announce  
describe  
dictate  
allege  
assert  
claim  
elaborate  
emphasize  
foretell  
imply  
infer  
inform  
insist  
instruct  
mention

state  
stress  
submit  
suggest  
swear  
voice  
volunteer

vow  
begin  
continue

demand  
implore  
propose

**To ask someone to do something:**  
urge

### **Say/said (strong verb suggested replacements cont.)**

**To answer:**  
remark  
reply  
report  
answer

implore  
howl  
roar  
screech  
squawk

whine

**To warn or instruct:**  
caution  
command  
nag  
notify  
remind  
warn

**To talk a lot/ repeat:**  
babble  
chant  
jabber  
echo  
mimic  
nag  
drone  
yak  
persist  
ramble  
rant  
rave  
recite  
recount  
remind  
repeat  
yap

**While happy or sad:**  
cackled  
chuckled  
cry  
encourage  
gasp  
giggle  
grieve  
groan  
grumble  
lament  
moan  
pout  
serenade  
shout  
shriek  
sigh  
sing  
sob  
sulk  
snicker  
wail  
weep  
whimper

**To say quietly:**  
murmur  
mutter  
whisper

**To call:**  
Summon

**Speak loudly/excited:**  
bellow  
boom  
clamor  
cackle  
demand  
cry  
exclaim  
explode

**To sing:**  
belt out  
chirp  
entertain  
fill the air  
perform  
serenade  
solo  
trill  
warble  
with music



**Get/got**  
**(strong verb suggested replacements)**

**To get an object or be able:**

acquire  
enter  
capture  
appear  
grasp  
earn  
show up  
seize  
turn up  
receive  
return  
apprehend  
attain  
pocket  
reap  
discover  
procure  
grab  
snatch  
purchase  
steal  
collect  
able  
achieve  
can  
profit  
secure

gather

**To go or get out:**

bounce  
climb  
reach  
fall  
spring  
fly  
roll  
glean  
enter  
appear  
show up  
turn up  
return  
approach  
join  
intrude  
invade  
arrive  
infiltrate  
burst in

realize  
fathom  
figure out  
discover  
understand  
grasp

**To understand:**

comprehend  
realize  
perceive  
catch on

**Look/See/Eat**  
**(strong verb suggested replacements)**

**To see/ look at:**

watch  
behold  
check out  
detect  
discover  
examine  
explore  
eye  
find  
gape  
gawk  
gaze  
glance  
glare  
glimpse  
inspect  
witness  
monitor  
notice  
observe  
peek  
peep  
peer  
scrutinize  
search  
spot  
spy  
stare  
study  
survey

**Look for:**

canvass  
forage  
hunt for  
pursue  
ransack  
rummage  
scavenge  
scour  
scout  
scrounge  
sweep  
track down  
trail

**To eat:**

devour  
snack  
chow  
chomp  
nibble  
munch  
bite  
chew  
digest  
dine  
feast  
gobble up  
gorge  
graze  
inhale  
nosh  
partake of  
pick at  
pig out  
scarf  
swallow  
wolf

## Good/Pretty/Nice (Quality Adjectives Suggested Replacements)

Person/idea:	Object:	To agree:	Pretty:	Nice:
scrupulous	terrific	agreeable	appealing	kind
godly	superior	satisfactory	beautiful	friendly
virtuous	extraordinary	presentable	attractive	pleasant
moral	marvelous	tolerable	elegant	amiable
righteous	excellent	all right	pleasant	cordial
honest	super	pleasant	delightful	gentle
noble	wonderful	pleasing	fair	delightful
wholesome	magnificent	flowing	darling	courteous
pure	splendid	effective	captivating	helpful
innocent	exemplary	worthwhile	gorgeous	considerate
courteous	fascinating	alluring	lovely	
well-mannered	heavenly	<b>Sensory:</b>	lovely	polite
obedient	superb	melodious	charming	enchanted
capable	beneficial	sweet	breathtaking	sweet
trustworthy	top quality	harmonious	exquisite	charming
accomplished	unparalleled	golden	lovely	cooperative
respectable	outstanding	clear	dazzling	neighborly
knowledgeable	delicious	pleasant	handsome	genial
gallant	unrivaled	heavenly	ideal	charismatic
qualified	delectable	glorious	ravishing	
unequalled	exquisite	spectacular	radiant	
expert	sumptuous	majestic	divine	
experienced	praiseworthy		splendid	
productive	favorable		bewitching	
commendable	appetizing		magnificent	
admirable	yummy			
credible	savory			
brilliant	refreshing			
ingenious	tasty			
resourceful	succulent			
inventive	revered			
creative	prized			
innovative	cherished			
idolized				
imaginative				

**Bad/ Mean/ Ugly**  
**(quality adjective suggested replacements)**

<b>Person/idea:</b>	<b>Actions:</b>	<b>Objects/things:</b>	<b>Mean:</b>
wicked	heinous	imperfect	cruel
unrighteous	terrible	inferior	obnoxious
amoral	spiteful	second-class	rude
immoral	awful	defective	ferocious
ungodly	brutal	inadequate	savage
dishonest	diabolical	unacceptable	brutal
unscrupulous	atrocious	lousy	miserly
dissolute	abominable	unfit	selfish
roguish	despicable	detrimental	hostile
crooked	contemptible	damaged	callous
untrustworthy	vile	ruined	cantankerous
disloyal	sordid	venomous	despicable
treasonous	foul	treacherous	formidable
insidious	wretched	regrettable	malicious
deceitful	reprehensible	horrible	nasty
sinister	disgraceful	<b>UGLY</b>	snide
sinful	shameful		vicious
obnoxious	grotesque		vile
criminal	scandalous		unscrupulous
base	snide		wicked
unreliable	revolting		sinister
naughty	obnoxious		villainous
repulsive	horrible		fiendish
disgusting	detestable		unpleasant
sly	crafty		unfriendly
conniving	cheating	unattractive	
cunning	dishonest	homely	
harsh	naughty	gruesome	

**Big/small/a lot**  
**(quality adjective suggested replacements)**

**Big**

bulky  
ample  
jumbo  
colossal  
enormous  
gigantic  
humongous  
immense  
mammoth  
massive  
sizable  
substantial

**Small**

baby  
itty bitty  
cramped  
inadequate  
insufficient  
little  
meager  
tiny  
puny  
petite  
scant  
short

**A lot**

abundance  
bunch  
bundle  
cluster  
heap  
load  
mass  
plenty  
stacks  
numerous  
several  
myriad

tremendous  
vast  
whopping  
burly  
brimming  
towering  
broad  
spacious  
monumental  
robust  
stupendous  
prominent  
grand  
huge

slight  
teensy  
teeny  
trivial  
undersized  
wee  
miniscule  
minute  
miniature  
meager  
narrow  
slight  
thin  
brief  
sparse  
skimpy

multitude  
profuse  
considerable

## ADVERBS

<b>Fast or often</b>	<b>Slow or careful</b>	<b>Positive/ good</b>	<b>Negative/ bad</b>
abruptly	evenly	happily	slyly
anxiously	slowly	excitedly	angrily
fervently	cautiously	joyfully	rudely
frantically	deliberately	enthusiastically	solemnly
briskly	exactly	kindly	ferociously
furiously	laboriously	soothingly	foolishly
suddenly	solidly	beautifully	smugly
hastily	steadily	meaningfully	sharply
immediately	calmly	generously	snidely
incessantly	carefully	gleefully	miserably
impatiently	patiently	nicely	frightfully
instantly	diligently	sweetly	mistakenly
quickly	properly	sympathetically	mockingly
intently	distinctly	gratefully	mournfully
rapidly		thankfully	stubbornly
intensely		thoughtfully	gravely
relentlessly		happily	clumsily
		tenderly	suspiciously
		gently	threateningly
		happily	greedily
		helpfully	grudgingly
		triumphantly	tragically
		playfully	crossly
		positively	unmercifully
		incredibly	dejectedly
		delightfully	unwillingly
		wholeheartedly	deceivingly
		proudly	harshly
		amazingly	violently
		bravely	viciously
		serenely	hopelessly
		reassuringly	unfortunately
		brightly	
		mightily	
		successfully	
		cleverly	

**Instead of  
really or very**

exceptionally  
extremely  
considerably  
tremendously  
decidedly  
definitely  
truly  
pointedly  
utterly  
distinctly  
especially

**To what extent  
is it done**

liberally  
lavishly  
casually  
discreetly  
partially  
lightly  
freely  
fully  
nearly  
easily  
vastly  
virtually

**Definite:**

truthfully  
knowingly  
explicitly  
seriously  
apparently  
absolutely  
actually  
frankly  
surely  
naturally  
obviously  
literally  
undeniably

**Shy/confident**

apologetically  
shyly  
bashfully  
quietly  
sheepishly  
hesitantly  
timidly  
confidently  
loudly  
assuredly  
smugly

charismatically  
proudly  
effectively

**When/ how  
often**

gradually  
occasionally  
finally  
eventually  
scarcely  
evenly  
increasingly  
constantly  
continually  
weekly  
annually  
periodically  
repeatedly

yearly  
daily  
infrequently  
frequently  
seldomly  
commonly  
typically  
inconveniently

**Other how  
adverbs**

abnormally  
absentmindedly  
separately  
aimlessly  
smoothly  
longingly  
mechanically  
silently  
softly  
neatly  
surprisingly  
closely  
openly

notably  
obligingly  
tightly  
conveniently  
coolly  
correctly  
physically  
highly  
curiously  
dearly  
possibly  
ultimately

potentially  
powerfully  
unknowingly  
innocently  
readily  
dreamily  
interestingly  
willfully  
restfully  
rigidly

## Decorations:

1. **Alliteration** – when two or more words that are near each other in a sentence start with the same sound (not necessarily letter).
  - a. Example: Dozens of dogs were digging in the dirt.  
Colorful kites climbed into the clouds.
2. **Three short staccato sentences** – placing three short sentences together will help grab a reader’s attention. They should have two to five words. Best when used at the beginning or end of paragraphs.
  - a. **Example:** The young girl floated gracefully around the dance floor. She knew everyone was staring at her, and then it happened. She tripped. She fell. She landed facedown in shame.  
  
The church in the Middle Ages was becoming more corrupt and no longer following the Bible. It was wrong. Someone had to tell them. Martin Luther did.
3. **Similes and metaphors** – a literary technique that is used to describe something by comparing it to something else. Similes compare two objects using like or as. Metaphors compare two things by saying one is the other.
  - a. Simile examples: He was busy as a bee. The snow covered the field like a blanket.
  - b. Metaphor examples- Jesus said,; “I am the vine; you are the branches. The snow blanketed the field.
4. **Personification** – Giving human like qualities to inanimate objects or animals.
  - a. Examples: The tires squealed with delight as the race began.  
The boat groaned as the angry wind tossed it about in the waves.



5. **Triple extensions** – repeating a word or phrase three times for dramatic effect. You can repeat the same word, a part of speech, a phrase or clause.
- a. Example (same word) – The boy was the hero of the land. The boy had defeated the dragon. The boy was a fraud.
  - b. Example (part of speech) – The new found country was baron, desolate, and intimidating. (adjectives)
  - c. Jesus was a savior for the Jews, for the gentiles, and for the whole world.
6. **Assonance** – words that have the same internal vowel sound found close together in a sentence.
- a. Example: The band clamored and clanged on their instruments
7. **Consonance** – words that end in the same consonant sound.
- a. Example: He took the stack of brick to Zach.
8. **Dramatic Openers/ Hooks-** designed to grab the reader’s attention
- a. **Question:** What would the world be like if Columbus never dared to set sail in search of a new route to India?
  - b. **Statistic Fact:** The Golden Gate Bridge took a mere three years to build, but its benefit has been felt for generations.
  - c. **Quote:** “Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness....”
  - d. **Shock:** Handheld electronic devices are robbing our youth of their childhood.
  - e. **Suspended interest:** No one knew when they went to work that morning that their lives and our country would be changed forever.
  - f. **An imperative (command):** Imagine the most relaxing vacation of your life.
  - g. **Fragments:** Faith. Lots of faith. The next step in my life was going to take lots of faith.
  - h. **Name dropping:** Mickey Mouse, Minnie Mouse, and Donald Duck greeted our family as we walked through the gates.

## Editing and Evaluation

Writing is an open-ended assignment, very different than a worksheet of math problems, for example. That being said open-ended assignments are much more difficult to assess, since there can be many ‘right’ answers. The use of rubrics greatly helps with this problem. Rubrics provide a very clear expectation for students. Teachers and students know exactly how an assignment is being assessed, which really takes the subjectivity out of the grading. A rubric is broken up into different areas of assessment. Every paper entering the portfolio will be graded using a rubric. Both the final paper and the rubric will be entered as the sample. The following represents the areas that are assessed.

## Writing Rubric Grades 4-12

Assessment Area	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
<p>Content and Development/Elaboration Maximum Possible: 50 points</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Content is not only excellent but all points are well developed. All major points are fully supported with elaborate details. Purpose is clear throughout. (50-45)</p>	<p>Content is comprehensive, accurate. - Major points are stated clearly and are well supported. Content and purpose of the writing are clear. (44-40)</p>	<p>Content is not comprehensive. - Major points are addressed, but not well supported. Content is inconsistent with regard to purpose and clarity of thought. (39-35)</p>	<p>Content is incomplete. - Major points are not clear and /or persuasive. (below 35)</p>
<p>Organization And Structure Maximum Possible: 20 points</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Organization is excellent. The flow throughout is seamless with excellent use of transitions. (20-19)</p>	<p>Content is well organized. Structure of the paragraph is clear and easy to follow. (18-16)</p>	<p>Structure of the paragraph is not easy to follow. - Paragraph transitions need improvement. (15-14)</p>	<p>Organization and structure detract from the message of the writer. - Paragraphs are disjointed and lack transition of thoughts. (below 14)</p>
<p>Format Maximum Possible: 10 points</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Strong intro and conclusion, with the appropriate number of body paragraphs. Content follows exact length guidelines. (10-9)</p>	<p>Paper follows designated guidelines. Paper is the appropriate length as described for the assignment. All paragraphs are present. (8-7)</p>	<p>Paper follows most guidelines. - Paper is over/ under word length. (6-5)</p>	<p>Paper lacks many elements of correct formatting. - Paragraphs are inadequate/excessive in length or missing. (below 5)</p>
<p>Readability Maximum Possible: 20 points _____</p>	<p>Only 4 or fewer mistakes with grammar/spelling and overall ability to write (20-19)</p>	<p>6 or fewer mistakes grammar/spelling and overall ability to write (18-16)</p>	<p>8 or fewer mistakes grammar/spelling and overall ability to write (15-14)</p>	<p>Some correct usage but more than 10 total mistakes were made. (below 14)</p>

Additional comments:

Total Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

## Revision Checklist

Focus on one target skill at a time. Read the item and then go back and read your paper for each item. Make sure your piece is exactly how you want it.

1. Do I have an opening sentence(s) that hooks the reader? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Is my piece focused? Does it stick to the topic  
throughout the piece? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Is my piece clear? Does it say what I want it to say?  
Do my sentences and ideas make sense? Flow? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Have I completely answered all the questions asked in  
the prompt? Refer back to prompt to check. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Have I included details, explanation, and elaboration  
of my ideas? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Do I have a closing sentence(s)? Does it close and  
tie up the piece? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Do my sentences show rather than tell? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Do I have a varied word choice? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Do I have a varied sentence structure (questions,  
exclamations, dialogue, one word sentences, variety  
of length)? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Do I have transition words? \_\_\_\_\_
11. Do I use figurative language? (simile, metaphor,  
personification, onomatopoeia, alliteration, etc)? \_\_\_\_\_

## Proofreading Marks

≡ Capitalize letter.

⊙ Add a period.

⊙ Add a question mark.

^ Add a comma.

^ Add an apostrophe.

○ Do not use a space.

”” Add quotation marks.

⌒ Take words out.

○ Spell correctly.

/ Lowercase letter.

⌞ Indent.

^ Add words.

| Divide into two words.

? This is confusing.

## Exemplars

The following section is a collection of excellent student examples of the various paper types. Understanding what constitutes great writing and being able to model that finished product is a critical part of improving writing. Using these papers as models will enhance writing. Consult this section throughout the writing process for each of these papers. Please note that these are superlative examples. The expectation is not that all students must perform at this very high level.

GHZ  
Narrative  
Written by a 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Student

GHZ. That's what they call the virus that is currently sweeping across the nation. Extremely contagious. Extremely deadly. No cure. Those are three of the traits that make GHZ one of the deadliest pathogens that have ever existed. The main problem is its lethality. The first symptom is a small cough. Then sneezing comes in. After that vomiting occurs, rashes and boils appear, and every few hours you black out. By that time you know you're finished.

Me, my brother Ben, and my mom haven't been infected yet. I'm seventeen, and my brother is eighteen. He has always been a bit enthusiastic and high strung, while I am normally quiet like my mom. We are surviving in our house and our basement is stocked with enough food to last us a few weeks. We can't risk going outside as the virus can breed in any open wounds or any other unprotected areas in the body, such as the mouth, nose or eyes. We witnessed the terrible effects of GHZ when my father got infected with it. When he started coughing, he said he would live in a different house so he wouldn't transfer the disease. The house directly in front of us is unoccupied, as are many other houses in our neighborhood. Every single day he would come to the window in his house so we would know he was ok. One day he didn't come to the window.

It was a terrible time for our family. It had a devastating effect on my mother. She cried for days. Ben took the only gas mask and found some flowers. It didn't help. Flowers can't bring Dad back. They're in a vase on our kitchen table anyway. Electricity and water still work. The whole world hasn't shut down. Everything is just so much more

depressing and vacant. Everyone stays inside their houses all day. So now here's my family, stuck in this awful period of history.

Today, Ben found the TV remote. We all piled onto the couch and flipped through channels. Although barely any shows were on, the news was still broadcasting. I guess there are some people who care more about money than they do about their life. The reporter was talking about advances in "the fight to cure this horrid plague." They were noble words, but they were also stupid. She had a terrible cough. She above all people should know that GHZ isn't getting cured anytime soon. Most of the scientists are probably sitting in their homes hoping they don't get infected.

"Ben, can you go down and get the french fries?" Mom asks. She then turns to me, "And can you get the oven heated up?" I nod and set the oven up. Ben comes back from the basement and puts the fries in the oven. "Do you think GHZ will ever go away?" I ask Ben. He looks at me and says jokingly, "I hope not, I enjoy having no school." I laugh and then head back to the couch. On the TV, I see people rioting in front of hospitals, holding children up that have boils and rashes on their skin. They probably think the doctors can help them. They're wrong.

Ten minutes later, the alarm on the oven goes off. I walk over to the oven and pull out the sheet of fries. Something catches my eye. There's a man at the window. He has a scraggly beard and a gas mask over his face. He holds up a piece of cardboard with marker written on it. It says "Have food?" I nod my head. He flips the cardboard over and writes something. He holds the cardboard up and on the other side. It reads "Can I have some?"



"Mom!" I call out, "There's a man outside asking for food!" Mom gets off the couch and looks out the window. After consideration, she nods at the man and he puts his hands together gratefully. "Ben! Come fill up a bag with some fries." Ben walks into the kitchen, gets a paper bag, and he stuffs it with some fries. He grabs the gas mask and straps it to his face. I hear him walk to the front door and open it. I watch as he gives the man the bag. Suddenly, a different man jumps out from the side of the house and tackles Ben. Two more men walk into the house. All of them have gas masks on.

One of the men points the gun at Ben and tells him to walk inside. Ben slaps the bag of fries out of the bearded man's hand angrily. We should of known it was a trap. Me, Ben, and Mom are in the living room. One of the men points the gun at me. "Alright lady," He says, "Tell us where your food is, or we shoot the boy." Mom starts crying. He starts counting,

"3, 2, -"

"Ok! Ok!" Mom screams, "It's in the basement!"

One of the men gets a little red wagon from outside. About five minutes later, they come out with most of our food. They run out of the house. Mom starts crying again. Ben comforts her and I walk into my room. I get worried and fearful. What are we going to do without food? We will probably only last two days with what's left in the basement. And the only reason they left that is because they couldn't carry it. What if someone robs us again? I have so many questions but no answers. I have a sickening feeling in my stomach, knowing we're going to die. Then I hear the front door open.

I walk out of my room just as the front door closes.

"Where did Ben go?" I ask Mom.

"He went to go find some food," She replies.

I doubt he will find any, but I am still hopeful. I try to disregard those feelings... hope normally leads to disappointment. It's about an hour before he gets back. Right when he comes in he rips off the gas mask and he has a huge smile on his face. He throws the gas mask down and yells, "The luck has certainly changed!" I have no idea what he's talking about, then he holds out two candy bars, one a Snickers, the other a Butterfingers. Both are me and Mom's favorite candies. He also has a revolver and three boxes of ammo.

"Where did you get all this?" I ask.

"I found an old supermarket, still loaded with food. And this," He holds up the revolver, "Was in the back of the store."

Ben loads up the revolver with a single bullet, spins the cylinder, and puts the barrel to his head.

"Ben," I say cautiously, "What are you doing?"

"I told you, the luck's changed," He replies.

I've always known Ben to be eccentric and fanatical, but never insane. Has the stress snapped something inside? His finger tightens on the trigger. There's only a one in six chance that he will die. But there is still always that one. And that one is what killed my brother. There is a loud bang as the bullet is fired. Ben falls to the ground. I can't believe what just happened. Mom and I just stand there horrified. I cry out and kneel on the ground beside my brother. Mom walks into her room with her face pale.

I don't know how long I sat there. Finally, no more tears came. I get up and put the gas mask on. I pick up Ben and bring him outside. I find a shovel and bury him next

to Dad. A few days pass by. Mom and I finish the last of our food. Barely any words have been spoken. I decide I should go try to find the supermarket that Ben found. It only takes me around ten minutes before I see it. I walk in and am happy to see food on the shelves. I get some plastic bags and begin to fill them. I see someone in the building. I begin to slowly try to leave, but the man sees me. I recognize him. He was one of the men who robbed our house. He was the man who killed Ben. If he hadn't robbed our house, if he hadn't stolen everything, Ben would have never come to this store. He would have never found the revolver. He would have never snapped from all of the stress. Anger fills me as I playback the event with Ben and the gun.

"Well, hey there," Says the man in a Southern accent, "I remember you."

"I remember you too," I say quietly.

"Well then we both have something in common," He says back.

"Only difference is I didn't kill my brother," I mutter.

The man raises his hands up. "I didn't kill your brother either. I've been scouting out your house, seeing if you had anything good. And from what I saw, he seemed to do a good enough job of that himself."

The comment pushes me over the edge. I run towards him and tackle him. I begin to punch him over and over. He tries to defend but I am powered by my rage. I put my hand on the top of his gasmask and rip it off. I'm not going to kill him. I'll let GHZ do that. "I hope you like rashes," I say as I leave the store.

I finally get home and take the food to the basement. When I get back up, Mom has the news on. I sit there and watch it. The reporter says that scientists have been working around the world and have an idea on how to cure the virus. She says it may take

a year a two, but I don't care. It's a start. And I have a feeling Mom and I will be able to last that long. We lasted a few months already. We have an abundant supply of food. And now there's going to be a cure.

"I guess there's a chance for us after all," I say to my mom.

She looks back and smiles. Then she coughs.

Melody  
Narrative  
Written by a 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Student

Tim's fingers flowed dexterously over the keys. Pick up tempo, pick up tempo, he thought. There we go. He picked up speed, arrived at the finale... and missed a note.

"Come on! I was so close to having that piece perfected!" Tim exclaimed.

"Come down for dinner, Tim. You've been playing that piano for the last four hours trying to improve that same piece. Persistence is one thing, but missing meals is another," called Tim's dad, rather annoyed.

Tim's dad was not proud of his son. The reason for this was that Tim's dad, Mr. Johnson, owned a software business. Mr. Johnson wanted Tim to succeed him in the business because he thought that technology was the next successful industry. Tim wanted to be a prosperous and well-known pianist who traveled the world to entertain millions. All Tim wanted to prove was that pianists could make a way in the world, and business wasn't the only approach.

One week ago, Tim came across a state piano competition while he was walking to school in the cold Pennsylvanian winter. He took it off the street post and read it. It would be held at one of the best concert halls in Pennsylvania on February 28, 2010. The prize would be \$10,000 for the winner! But there was an entry fee of \$200, and he only had a month. If he could enter the competition and win, then his dad would probably have more respect for his ability in music. He would just have to find a way to earn the \$200.

He fashioned an idea. He could wash his dad's company's windows on the weekends. Perfect. He would just have to manage his time between washing windows, school, and his piano practice. That shouldn't be too hard thought Tim. It turned out to be

a more difficult task than he thought. Tim had a hard time negotiating with his dad on a price for washing his windows. Tim's prices were outrageously high, and Mr. Johnson's were astonishingly low. Mr. Johnson finally wheedled Tim down to \$10 a window. Tim worked hard, long hours in the bitter cold washing industrial sized windows for his assiduous dad. He finally had the money, but he needed more musical practice. Tim could hardly imagine the competition he would face in the concert hall. His month had been cut down to two weeks. When Tim got home, he immediately went to the piano. The theme for the competition was "Interpretation". He picked an old classical piece and took time to rewrite it into a modern version. This process ate up an entire week. With one more week to spare, Tim diligently practiced day and night. He had no time for fun and games.

Finally, the day of the competition was upon him. It was a dreary day. It had been sleeting which covered the ground with an icy slush. Tim anxiously put on his best suit and hopped into his dad's Mercedes. They drove off. It was a silent ride to the concert hall. Tim listened to the noiseless tread of the tires on the gravel and the rhythmical whirl of the window wipers clearing off the slush. They arrived cold and wet. Tim did not let this dampen his spirits. He looked at the roster and discovered he was last. They always save the best for last thought Tim. They were seated and the host gave a lengthy introduction. Tim became fidgety until they started to have the contestants play. He couldn't believe how poetically they played. It was like a story was being unfolded without a book.

The words “Tim Johnson” broke into his dream, and he realized that it suddenly was his turn. He got up to leave when his father said, “Just do your best. I am proud of the man you have become.”

Tim couldn’t believe his ears. Had he imagined his father’s disapproval all along? No, he couldn’t have. What made him change his mind? All these questions raced through Tim’s mind as he approached the piano onstage. He took a seat on the bench. He looked out to the crowd at the hundreds of guests and competitors that sat and anticipated his performance. He placed his hands on the keys and began to play. His fingers streamed over the keys. It was all habit to him. The notes rushed into to his head and exited through his hands. It was going smoothly until he missed a note. Oh no, Tim thought instantly, I’m going to have to change the style. He changed the entire style. He went from a classical piece to a modern piece to, now, a jazz. He thought it sounded horrendous. He felt hundreds of pairs of inquisitive eyes stare intently at him. Tim finished. He took a quick self-conscious bow and exited stage.

The judges took a thirty-minute intermission to look over the results. His dad tried to encourage him, but Tim felt nothing but dread for the results. After the allotted time, the judges signaled for everyone to come into the concert hall once again. The primary judge gave another extensive speech.

Finally, she ended in “We had a difficult time grading the contestants by their creativity, performance, and above all interpretation. We have come to a unanimous conclusion. We decided that... Timothy Johnson was the most creative and interpretive out of all the contestants. Thank you Timothy, and every one of our contestants, for entertaining us all.”

Tim couldn't believe it. He had just won ten-thousand dollars. He was already trembling because of his chancy move, but now he was even more so because he had won. His dad looked at him and smiled, "I knew you could do it from the start. The moment I saw you practice long hours and work hard for the entry fee was when I started to feel wrong about my thoughts. You are a very talented kid, and I'm not going to stop you from achieving your goals."

Tim was so joyful he didn't know what to say. He raced onstage to retrieve his prize. The judge asked, "Tim, I have two questions. First, what is your piece called?" Tim answered still in wonder, "I like to call it 'Melody'." "Beautiful title," the judge replied. "Second, what are you going to do with the money?" Tim couldn't think because he was still in shock. He had no plans for the money. All he knew was that this was the best day ever.



Blackbird  
Narrative  
Written by an 11<sup>th</sup> grade Student

“When the shadows of this life have gone, I'll fly away. Like a bird from prison bars has flown, I'll fly away. I'll fly away. Oh Glory, I'll fly away. In the morning when I die, Hallelujah, by and by, I'll fly away. I'll fly away.” The lyrics drifted through the old church building as two sparrows perched on the steeple. The depth of the words was felt from inside everyone as they praised. Although there were troubles contained by every one of the hearts within that room, they all found comfort being there together, worshipping. The heavens shown with radiance as streaks of light reached down towards the earth. The sun's rays reflected gently off of the black polished casket that was propped open in the front so that everyone could see. This was done just right, so that if desired, one could go up and have their last goodbyes to their beloved.

The rows of chairs were lined up just about perfectly. Each row had fifteen chairs with the exception of one; which was one chair short. This chair was off in the corner, facing away from everybody. In that chair sat an older lady with short brown tangled hair. Her roots had grown out and a touch of gray was starting to appear at the crown of her head. Stress marks could be seen around the corners of her eyes as well as dark purplish bags that drooped underneath. It was quite obvious that she had not slept for days. From head to toe she was swathed in a variety of dark rags. Each article of clothing was a different design and shade. However, all of them had some kind of stain or discoloration on it. A slight odor lingered around her. Alone, the woman rocked herself back and forth, back and forth. She mouthed the words of the songs but could not seem to get any sound to come out. No one knew who this woman was or why she faced away

from everything, but they did not have the desire to get close enough to her to find out; so they just let her be.

Afraid to see the cold pale lifeless face of the little girl; there the woman sat, not daring to turn around and face her. Fighting to keep back all of the heartbreaking memories that were filling her mind, the woman tried to distract herself with the words of the song. “Oh, how glad and happy when we meet; I'll fly away. No more cold iron shackles on my feet; I'll fly away. I'll fly away. Oh Glory, I'll fly away.” This did not help at all; instead it just brought back the memory of when she had first met the young child.

It was a dark dreary day. The gloomy clouds masked over the once clear sky. Not a speck of blue could be spotted through the dark cloak. The thunder mocked those who were afraid of what was soon to come next; a storm. The woman huddled herself against the rough bark of an old oak tree; praying that the canopy of the tree would be enough protection from the storm. An icy breeze caused shivers to rush up her spine, as the first raindrops began to fall. Pressing up closer to the wood, she closed her eyes and tried to feel the warmth within.

Moments later, the woman felt a slight tap on her shoulder. She opened her eyes to see a little girl with yellow rain boots holding a bright pink umbrella, standing in front of her. The little girl grinned and introduced herself to the woman as Charlie. Confused, the woman just smiled back and nodded. Why was this young girl talking to her? She was Mary Hudson, the homeless widow of the town; nobody talked to her. In fact, nobody even noticed her. In this town only the wealthy were noticed or mattered to anyone. If you were not rich or “status quo” then you were looked right through, as if you were a

ghost. Mary had been looked past and unnoticed for so long that she had almost forgotten that anyone could actually see her. Why was this girl different? Did she not know the “rules” of this town?

“Beautiful day, isn’t it?” Charlie swayed as she spoke. Scanning the girl’s face, Mary sighed. “Beautiful would not be the word choice that I would use for a day like this.” Compassion started to form on Charlie’s face. This poor woman was getting soaked and it looked like she had no place to go to get out of the rain. The little girl smiled and sat down next to Mary. Lifting up her umbrella, she covered the dripping wet woman’s head to keep the rain from touching her any more than what it already had.

There they sat together, enjoying each other’s company; both of them sharing stories about their lives. Mary told about her husband and how he died in a car accident earlier that year. When he died, she had lost her job and got evicted from her house. Charlie sat there listening, holding onto every little detail. When Mary was through, Charlie told her about her admiration for birds. She told about all of the different types of birds and how unique every single one of them were. She shared about how tiny they were compared to humans and how they seemed unimportant, yet God gave them food every day. “It is remarkable if you think about it,” Charlie stated, leaning closer to Mary. “If God takes care of all of the little birds, and they are so tiny compared to us; then we know that God will take care of us as well.” Mary had never thought of it that way. Was God really taking care of her right now? She had felt so alone and hungry this whole time. “I have always wondered what it is like to fly,” Charlie gazed at the sky that was now clearing up. “Birds seem so free. I wish I could be free like them.” Unsure what to

think about this statement, Mary studied Charlie's face, but soon followed her gaze to the sky.

Almost every day for two months, under the old oak tree, Charlie came back to be with her new friend. Most days, Charlie would sneak out food from her house to give to Mary. For the majority of the days the two new friends would talk. However, some days Charlie was not feeling too well and just wanted to lie on the grass and listen to the birds. She especially liked listening to the blackbirds sing. Charlie claimed that they had the sweetest songs of all the birds because they always sang after it rained. "It is like they are telling us that everything is ok because the storm is over." As the time went on, Charlie was starting to feel unwell more often. She seemed as if she were getting weaker and weaker. Mary was starting to worry about Charlie's health. However, every time she questioned Charlie about it, she told her not to be concerned, that she was just tired and wanted to listen to the birds. Not fooled by that explanation, Mary kept an eye on Charlie, but let her be at peace as she wished.

Then one week, Charlie did not return to the oak tree. The next week passed by, and still no Charlie. Mary began missing her little friend dearly, so she decided to walk around town to see if she could find her. She glanced in every store, every restaurant, she even passed by all of the schools to see if they started early this year. No Charlie. Hurt and confused Mary sat down on a metal bench outside of the bakery, where she usually sat at the end of every week. The bakery owner always gave her their expired bread for food. Glancing at the newspaper stand in front of her, she saw something that caught her eye. It was Charlie's picture on the front page. Mary rushed to the stand and grabbed a paper to read it.

*Charlette Raine Robinson was born June 17, 1997 in Manhattan to Drake Michael Robinson and Margret Anne Miller Robinson. She died on Thursday, July 19, 2012 at the Manhattan Hospital...*

Mary dropped the newspaper. She could not stand to read any more. Inhaling in, Mary gasped for air. Her sweet little friend was gone forever and she could not do anything about it. Tears began flooding her eyes. Why did God keep on taking away the people she loved? She just did not understand. Mary sprinted to the old oak tree where she had met Charlie many times before. When she reached it, she fell to the ground and wrapped herself up into a ball, where she wept. Rocking herself back and forth, Mary focused on her breathing; breathe in, breathe out, breathe in, breathe out. The pain from her sorrow was stabbing within her. Mary tried to wrap her arms tighter around herself to ease the throbbing, but it did not help. She still felt the pain. As the hours passed by, and as the sun changed positions in the sky, Mary finally started to go numb as she drifted into sleep.

There Mary sat, facing the wall of the old church building, praying for courage to go see Charlie one last time. Her legs lifted herself out of the chair without realizing that she was doing so. She began walking down the aisle towards the small casket. The people in the rows turned and stared at her with disgust. As she reached the place where her friend lay, Mary fought her tears back. She reached into her pocket and placed an object by the little girl's hands. A little blackbird pin. As she did so, she squeezed the little girl's hand and whispered, "The storm is over my sweet friend, may the little bird's song always bring you great joy forever more."

Adrenaline  
Narrative  
Written by an 11<sup>th</sup> Grade Student

The scent of new leather encompasses me as I lower myself onto the driver's seat. Resting my hands on the steering wheel, I gaze out the front windshield, imagining what it would be like to drive this magnificent machine. I close my eyes and picture myself speeding down an unoccupied road, the windows rolled down and music blaring from the subs. Just me, the car, and the road outstretched before us.

"Ma'am?" The high-pitched voice snaps me back to reality. I reluctantly turn my head to look at the scrawny salesman standing awkwardly just outside the car door. "I don't think you heard me the first time... but, uh, would you like to take the R8 for a spin?" He dangles the keys in front of my face.

"Hop in," I answer.

I watch as Tom, the salesman, saunters around to the passenger side of the Audi R8 and then ducks inside the vehicle. Fastening his seatbelt, Tom gives me a brief description of the test drive route before surrendering the keys to me. The engine roars to life before quieting to a purr. Despite Tom insisting that we stick to the normal route, I set off a different way. After several minutes of him persistently advising me to turn around, I turn the radio up instead. Slouching in his seat, Tom finally gives up the fight. As the miles begin to add up, my mind begins to wander back to the day I started building a ramp. At first the ramp didn't look like much of anything. But, as the days passed, it had begun to take shape. It was tall, wide, and very sturdy. Today, it would be utilized.

It seemed like just the other day when I was only a teen fantasizing about this day. Everything seemed so far out of reach. It was merely a dream, a wish; something that I was almost certain would never come true. But, between my adolescent years and today, I have worked insane hours and saved up most of my paychecks – all just an attempt to make that dream come true. And now what was a dream is becoming reality!

I glance at the clock as I turn onto an old dusty road. The clock reads 2:30. A couple of miles pass by in a heartbeat before I deliberately bring the Audi to a stop. In front of us is a long dirt road. A huge ramp rests at the end of the stretch, and following that are train tracks. Tom leans forward, staring at the ramp that lay before us. He swivels his head around to face me and declares, “Turn - this car - AROUND!”

Ignoring his command, I focus on the road ahead of me. I turn the radio off and roll the windows down. For a while, the Audi’s consistent purr is the only sound to be heard. It feels as if a million butterflies are trapped within my stomach, fighting with every ounce of energy to be set free. For a split second, I feel panic, but excitement soon replaces that sensation. It is time.

The train’s whistle slices through the air, its single note reverberating within my soul. Black smoke reaches its ashen fingers toward the sky. The train comes into view next, chugging across the horizon. It’s getting closer every second.

I grip the steering wheel tightly, causing my knuckles to turn white. It is just me, the car, and the road outstretched before us. Three, Two, One! My foot slams on the pedal and the car jolts forward, accelerating at lightning speed. The road is a blur as the R8 conquers everything in its path. We zoom down the road, reaching maximum speed as we hit the ramp head on. Blaring the horn, the train driver attempts to caution us, so

much for that. We catapult into the air and sail over the passing train. Adrenaline pulses through my veins and I can't help but laugh in the face of danger. The Audi's nose gradually tilts forward from the weight of the engine, and we plummet back towards Earth. We land roughly, and the force of impact causes Tom and me to jolt forward. My head hits the steering wheel hard, and if it weren't for the seatbelts, we would have been thrown from the car. Thankfully, we return to solid ground safely, with everything still intact, despite the brutal landing. The car slows down and comes to a complete stop. Seeing that the R8 has survived the trip and therefore passing my test, I look over at the trembling Tom and declare, "I'll take it!"



The Friendship of Damon and Pythius  
Opinion/Critique  
Written by a 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Student

"Damon and Pythias" is one of forty myths gathered together in a collection of Roman and Greek myths called "Classical Myths to Read Aloud" which was written by William F. Russell. Originally this myth was spoken by Cicero, a famous Roman orator, who lived c.100 B.C.. "Classical Myths to Read Aloud" was published by Crown Trade Books in 1989. This three page story proclaims the true value of friendship. Dionysius, the villain in the story, was actually a Greek tyrant living c.400 B.C.

In this myth there are three main characters. Damon and Pythias were two noble friends, whose loyalty to each other was tested by a ruthless tyrant, Dionysius. Dionysius's cruelty was unlimited. Stubbornly refusing to listen to reason, he even executed a villager after simply dreaming that the man had committed a crime. The villagers lived in fear since their cruel leader was in absolute control. Living on the island of Sicily, Pythias had no way to escape the cruelty of the king because of the surrounding waters. Although the story has a happy ending, the story line itself is very suspenseful. This myth takes place before the time of Christ.

Although poor Pythias had committed no crime, the wicked Dionysius accused him of treason and sentenced him to death. Trying desperately to prove his innocence, Pythias finally realized he could not change the king's mind, and asked for only one favor: to settle his earthly affairs. The king agreed with one condition that Pythias left a hostage to die in his place in case he failed to return. Without even thinking, Pythias knew who he would ask: his faithful friend Damon. Pythias, who left to complete his

work, was delayed because of uncontrollable circumstances and could not return as soon as he wished. Tragically he was losing time! The eleventh hour was nearing, and still no Pythias. The wicked Dionysius had the gallows prepared.

Only minutes before Damon was to be executed, Pythias burst through the crowd and rushed into Damon's arms. He was exhausted. Although the people were weeping, when Pythias came they began to cheer. The king, who was greatly moved, immediately pardoned Damon and Pythias. Asking the two young men for their friendship, he stated that he would try to be as good a friend to them as they were to each other. In this way they transformed the hard heart of the tyrant. This story teaches that there is no greater love than to lay one's life down for another. The two characters, Damon who was to be executed, and Pythias who rushed exhausted into Damon's arms, are widely used as examples of friendship.

Friendship was the theme; Pythias was the hero; and Dionysius was the villain. As all myths do, this one teaches a very important lesson. It is particularly about friendship, loyalty, and kindness. In John 15:13 Jesus says, "Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for a friend." All men should strive to imitate Christ's love as did Damon and Pythias.

“Masque of the Red Death”  
Literary Critique  
Written by a 10<sup>th</sup> Grade Student

Not every danger or fear can be avoided by bolted doors and sturdy walls. This is proved in the six-page horror story “The Masque of the Red Death”, which was written by Edgar Allen Poe in 1842 and published by *EMC Mirrors and Windows*.

This short story tells the tale of Prince Prospero, a dauntless and sagacious prince determined to escape the clutches of the Red Death, which is ravaging the country. Prince Prospero takes up refuge in his extensive and magnificent house, which features seven unique rooms: the blue room, the purple room, the green room, the orange room, the white room, the violet room, and finally, the black room. Each of the first six rooms is completely decorated in that one color, down to the tinted windows, except the black room. This room has crimson covered windows, and houses a large ebony grandfather clock that rings every hour.

Prince Prospero, in a civilized attempt to outrun the Red Death, which plagues the world, gathers his friends to stay in his house, away from danger, until the threat of the Red Death is over. After six months of hiding, Prospero holds a masquerade. There is music and food and dancing, and most importantly, the ebony grandfather clock. The clock rings every hour, on the dot. The sound is so loud that the orchestra stops playing, the dancers stop dancing, and everything is still. Once the echo of the last bong subsides, the festivities commence again.

The bell rings again. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve chimes; twelve ominous clangs ring out through the seven rooms. Midnight has arrived. The routine continues, everyone is silent until the last sound is

gone. However, when all is quiet again, a figure is spotted amongst the revellers. This figure is cloaked in black, his face hidden. He stands, unmoving, as do the almost captivated party guests. The Prince, furious, demands an explanation and calls for someone to hang him. No one approaches the intruder. Instead, the intruder passes through the seven rooms silently. Prince Prospero pulls a dagger and chases after him. When they arrive at the black room, the Prince raises his dagger, but is cut off when the stranger turns quickly and grabs him. He falls to the ground, dead. The other people lash out, ripping at the phantom's clothes, only to see his face. He is the image of the Red Death, covered in the clothes of death and drenched in blood. One by one, the Red Death kills every last one of the dancers.

This story is very appealing because it holds a sense of artistic language and finesse that is very hard to accomplish in such a small amount of space. It is very dark, however, with a lack of a sense of hope, and the message that you cannot outrun such a thing as the plague, or any danger for that matter. "The Masque of the Red Death is a good story to read for people who can handle a dark ambience, but it is a psychological thriller and should not be taken lightly. Edgar Allen Poe is a disturbed man, yet his mind holds some of the treasures of writing, which have never been captured by another author. He has written some less gory stories and poems, and he is someone worth looking into, but not for the faint of heart.

Society in the Age of Television  
Opinion/Agree/Disagree  
Written by a 10<sup>th</sup> Grade Student

In “The Trouble with Television”, Robert MacNeil analyzes the negative effects of watching television on modern society. He is of the opinion that watching television cripples many aspects of our lives, including the ways we think, our skills of communications, and our ability to interact with each other. MacNeil’s points are valid and are shared with many others, including me. He starts his essay with an attention-grabbing statistic stating that, “By the age of 20, you will be exposed to at least 20,000 hours of television.” This thought is staggering in itself, but MacNeil follows it by saying that you can add 10,000 hours for each decade you live after 20. So the question becomes, is television an evil of this society?

As is demonstrated by the above quote, MacNeil’s main point is that television subtracts from leading a productive life. This belief is shown through his statement, “In short, too much television usurps one of the most precious of all human gifts, the ability to focus your attention yourself, rather than just passively surrender it.” Macneil explains that in the time we watch television, we could learn enough to be an astronaut or engineer. We could be speaking other languages, traveling, or writing. Instead, we prefer to sit and blankly stare at lives that never existed but were merely created in the minds of producers and directors who live only for the attention we give. Macneil further argues that the fast-pace of television appeals to our short-attention span. This dangerous attraction then makes it difficult for students to focus on daily activities, such as homework. Macneil recognizes that marketers must keep their watchers’ attention, even if this means sacrificing the watchers’ mental health.

Because MacNeil's points are indicative of society today, I agree with them. If we learned to think for ourselves, we could do so much more with our lives than we do now. Currently, television is part of the scheduled day; people rush home in order to avoid missing a favorite show. Watching television has replaced the sacred act of eating together at the dinner table as a family. Students post-pone and procrastinate when it comes to homework just to fit in one more show. Bible studies are left undone many times, because television has robbed the day of so many precious minutes. In addition to all these atrocities, a majority of conversation revolves around what has been seen on television, for example, who was voted off on American Idol. Lastly, surveys have shown that most people would rather watch a movie than read a book. This glaring statistic speaks to an increasingly lazy society and apathy towards permitting our minds to truly think of new ideas. For all of these reasons, MacNeil's belief that television has created more harm than good is valid.

In conclusion, though television is not always bad, it does lead some to waste their time. Not to mention, it requires zero thought process; one is merely spoon-fed electronic stimulation. We live a society that relies on technology more heavily than the actual thought process. This notion is a serious dilemma that requires attention.

Junk Food  
Opinion/Persuasive  
Written by a 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Student

With busier lives, more and more people are looking to cheap, quick junk food, prepackaged food, and fast food chains. In 1921 this craze started with the opening of the first fast food restaurant, White Castle. After that, many other speedy choices surfaced. For example, Hostess Brand was started in the 1930s, selling prepackaged cakes and breads, and Swanson created the so called “TV Dinner” in the early 1940s. These quick and easy choices are not healthy, however. They cause health issues, hold little nutritional value, and are proven to be addictive. These easier meals are not the right choice.

Junk food does not contain the nutritional value needed to sustain a healthy lifestyle. First, these prepackaged or quick foods are made to appeal predominantly to taste. Unwholesome chemicals are usually added to prepackaged food for this purpose. For example, artificial strawberry flavoring can contain forty-nine different chemicals. Likewise, vanilla flavoring sometimes comes from petrochemicals, chemicals that derive from fossil fuels like coal or natural gas, or come from by-products of the paper industry. Chemicals are also added for color or appearance. Things like artificial dyes come from coal and petroleum. These chemicals are a poor substitute for natural, healthy, organic foods. Lastly, preservatives are added to create a longer shelf life for the food. The most popular preservative, sulfur dioxide, can be found as a preservative in most junk foods. All of these added chemicals contribute little to no positive nutritional value.

Many studies have been conducted to prove that junk food is addictive. Some of these studies state that junk food and fast food are as addictive as cocaine. After conducting a study on the brainwaves of rats, Amber Greviskes states “The researchers showed that the pleasure-center in rats’ brains were overstimulated from the fast food, similar to an addict’s cocaine binge.” This is partly due to an increase in leptin, the chemical that signals hunger. When eating these foods, the rats in Greviskes’ study thought they were on the verge of starvation. This increase in leptin is not as dramatic in humans, but it still plays a role in the addiction. Also, once the consumer has finished eating, it looks for that “high” again, eating more. This cycle is a slippery slope. “Since processed foods are loaded with synthetic chemical additives, they are technically drugs themselves,” Says Ethan A. Huff of NaturalNews. Overall, there are over twenty-eight different studies conducted about junk food being addictive.

Health issues are common effects of junk food. The most apparent cause of eating these unhealthy foods is obesity. Studies by the latest Gallup-Healthway’s Well-Being Index show that 63.1% of adults in America were either overweight or obese in 2009. Obesity leads to other health concerns like type two diabetes. This is caused by insulin resistance. When insulin in blood cannot do its job, sugar cannot get into the cells of the body, thus causing high blood sugar. Cardiovascular disease is another major health issue caused by an unhealthy diet of fast food and junk food. Being the leading cause of death around the world, this disease is triggered by fat and plaque buildup in the body’s arteries. This can lead to heart failure, heart attacks and death. Hypertension, or high blood pressure, is another effect of an unhealthy diet. It is caused by a high sodium intake and can lead to a stroke, heart failure, or heart attack. A change in mood is a



common side effect of eating these innutritious foods. All in all, keeping an unhealthy diet of junk food can cause awful bodily dysfunctions.

In conclusion, junk food is an unwholesome substitute for a healthy diet. Eating a steady diet of junk foods can cause lifelong problems. With effects like little nutritional value, being addictive, and negative health issues, people should be reaching for a celery stick instead of a bag of chips.

Gun Control is not the Answer  
Opinion/Persuasive  
Written by an 10<sup>th</sup> Grade Student

Prohibition of firearms is a very delicate issue with two distinct sides. On one side are those who feel gun control is a necessity for safety, while others feel that banning firearms will not stop crime. Regardless, guns have become one of the main causes of death in the United States. Just because the right to bear arms has yielded some unsavory results, there is still no reason to make gun ownership illegal. Three arguments that gun ownership and use should remain legal are: the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment of the United States Constitution states it's legality; proper gun knowledge and use can increase the safety of adults and children; and removing the legal possession of guns will do nothing to prevent or reduce crime.

The Second Amendment of the U.S. Constitution states "a well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed." For over a hundred years this has been interpreted to mean that everyone has the right to own a gun, but lately many people have come to believe that it means the right of the militia or military to bear arms. The Amendment's meaning is two-fold. Part one is about maintaining a militia to protect the freedom of the country, but that has nothing to do with the second part. The second part specifically states " the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed." The Amendment clearly states the people, not the militia, so it is unconstitutional to take away a person's right to own a firearm.

Another point often made by those for gun control is the safety of kids who find guns. The kids end up accidentally shooting themselves or others. Instances such as these

have occurred, but it has been proven that children who are around guns are actually safer than those who are not. There are a few reasons for this. One, parents who train their kids wisely in gun safety instill a healthy amount of respect for the lethal weapon that it is. Second, they are less curious and are less likely to play with a gun, because they have been around guns. Once again due to the parental training, children are much less likely to experiment or play because they know how dangerous they are. John Stossel, with ABC News, conducted a study on this very topic, of how likely kids were to play with guns who had never come in contact with them before. What the study showed was that the kids who had zero experience with a gun were the ones who tried firing a gun. The kids who had grown up with guns knew how to properly handle them and did not attempt to fire them at all. Further, the kids who had already been exposed to guns by a parent knew what to do and how to handle the gun (ABC). The same arguments hold true for adults who encounter weapons. Those with knowledge and respect for the serious nature of a gun do not abuse or act carelessly when in contact with them. In summation, the most important way to keep kids and adults safe around firearms is to have proper knowledge and respect for what improper gun use can lead to.

The final reason why guns should remain legal is that eliminating guns does not reduce crime. It has been found that on average, countries with the most gun control have the highest crime rates (Kleck). If guns were illegal, people who want guns can still obtain them. This leaves the honest people defenseless against attack (Staley). The basic right to defend oneself, family, and home is completely jeopardized when guns are taken away. California has some of the strictest gun laws in the United States, and California also has one of the highest crime rates too (Kleck). The Midwest has a lower crime rate

than the Midwest of Canada, even though Canada has stricter gun laws. It is also thought that the United States has the highest crime rate in the western hemisphere. That is not true. The highest crime rate actually belongs to countries like Jamaica and Mexico. Their crime rate, especially in murder, is almost twice that of the United States, and Jamaica and Mexico have virtually prohibited gun ownership by citizens (Kleck).

Up to 1981, Britain had one of the lowest crime rates involving guns in the world, but that year they started gun control. That gun control limited the access almost completely to handguns and assault weapons. From 1981 to 1992 their crime rose almost 200 percent (Kleck). On the other hand there is Switzerland, which has one of the lowest crime rates in Europe. Switzerland has laws that state that every man age eighteen to fifty-six should own an assault rifle. These men are also forced to serve in the military. The Swiss government makes them keep a rifle at home, so they will practice with it and know how to use it. Their owning assault rifles is what keeps the crime rate low. Imagine breaking into a house when it is a fact that the owner has an assault rifle (Staley). The fact is eliminating or making laws that attempt to control guns only harms law-abiding citizens and does nothing to reduce the crime rate in any nation.

This nation and others are accustomed to certain inalienable rights, the right to bear arms included. When horrible crimes occur, it is the natural reaction to want to ban guns completely, but the fact is, that is no solution. It has been proven that those countries (and states in the US) who adopt gun control laws see a great increase in the amount of gun-related crimes. This compelling statistic plus the fact that the Constitution implicitly states that gun ownership is legal are two great reasons why gun control should never be an option. The final reason is that children and adults are safest when they are

safely exposed to proper gun use. The solution to living in a safe world should be properly training those citizens who legally own firearms and locking up all criminals who misuse weapons.

## Resources

ABC News Report: “John Stossel links Gun Control to Higher Crime Rates.” Available at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qyoLuTjguJA>

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[www.pulpless.com/gunlock/kleck2.html](http://www.pulpless.com/gunlock/kleck2.html)

Staley, R. “Charter Rights for Gun Collectors”. Alberta Report: Vol. 20, Issue 42, p 36.  
October 4, 1993.

Romans  
Biblical Analysis  
Written by an 11<sup>th</sup> Grade Student

The book of Romans is found in the New Testament of the Bible after the book of Acts but before Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. Paul wrote the book of Romans around the year 57 A.D. Paul recorded this book while in Corinth. He delivered this letter to the Church of Rome while he was on his way to modern day Spain.

Paul states in the first few chapters of his letter that we cannot fix our sinful nature. Sin separates us from God. He says that no amount of good works can earn us God's grace. His grace is simply given to us. When Jesus died on the cross, He made a way for us to traverse the abyss of sin to reach God's love and peace (Romans 8:2). The law that Moses gave is not sufficient anymore for people to commune with God. In Romans 7:7, Paul replies to an unspoken question that the Jews in Rome might ask. "If the law is causing so many problems, is it useless and just as bad as sin?". Paul answers this by saying that the law had a perfectly legitimate function which was to give clear guidelines for right and wrong. Now that Jesus has died for us, we do not have to worry about what is right or wrong. We will naturally desire to please Him with our actions which will allow us to discern good and evil.

After Paul explains God's plan for redemption, he then tell us that everyone is able to receive this gift. Jews and Gentiles alike are able to receive this message. According to the law, Jews were the only people who God loved. Everyone else was pagans. However, Paul brings up an important passage of scripture that says: "'There is none righteous, no, not one.'" We are all equal in God's eyes. Since we have all sinned (Romans 3:23) we are all able to receive God's gift of eternal life.

Now, after accepting eternal and abundant life, Paul writes how to live your new life with Christ within you. Paul gives us a strong, yet simple challenge: Commit to God your full life and see what happens. You will grow from the inside out and be forever changed in his glory! (Romans 12:1) In the next verse, he tells us not to succumb to the patterns and customs of the modern culture that surrounds us. The way to do this is to renew our minds. The Holy Spirit will let us know what is good and acceptable then. (Romans 12:2) Paul continues on to tell us not to let ourselves burn out and lose our passion for Christ and His kingdom. We must craft our lives on top of a God-like love for one another. Basically, we must not ruin our lives with selfish gain. We should think of others before ourselves.

Paul portrays to us the core fundamentals of a relationship with God and the background of that relationship. He brings us to the realization that we are all sinners. Even with this dreadful fact, God has given us hope by giving us the life from Jesus Christ. Since we are all in the same boat, everyone has an equal opportunity to accept Christ's love. No one is exempt! Paul goes on to give us advice on how to live as Christians. Everything boils down to having love at your very core. We must love people who we do not think deserve our love. If we do not love them, why would they want to know Christ? If we are supposed to represent Christ, why would they want to have a personal relationship with someone who does not build them up and encourage them? We must commit our everyday life to Christ. That means the important decisions we make and who we spend our time with should reflect Christ. If we do not follow this advice, we will find ourselves reflecting a negative image of Christ to nonbelievers. Also, God wants the best for us. He not only sent His Son to give us eternal life, but also to give us

abundant and prosperous life here on earth! Because God wants the best for our lives, He will direct to the most fruitful destination. God wants all this for us! That is why He sacrificed His Son for us. I for one, have taken God up on His offer, and I would not trade it for anything.



A Letter of Joy  
Biblical Analysis  
Written by a 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Student

The book of Philippians, which is located in the New Testament, is one of the most encouraging and joyful books of the Bible. Written by the apostle Paul, it is a letter to the church in Philippi. The letter is believed to have been written in 64-68 AD during Nero's reign as emperor. This was an especially miraculous time for a letter of joy and grace to be written because it was the era of Nero's brutal persecutions of Christians. It is also believed Paul that wrote this letter to Philippi while he was in prison. Despite these hardships and suffering though, Paul managed to write a letter of encouragement, instruction, and praise for God.

Throughout the book of Philippians, the word "joy" is penned many times by the apostle Paul. The letter begins with rejoicing and thanksgiving as Paul remembers the church of Philippi, and he is filled with joy at the mere thought of their partnership in the gospel. He prays for the Philippians to grow in their love and discernment of what is pure and blameless until Christ's return. Paul also recognizes that his imprisonment encourages brothers in Christ to be fearless and share the gospel. However, there are some that preach Christ's word out of envy and rivalry, but Paul nevertheless rejoices because Christ is still being preached. Although Paul desires to be with Christ in Heaven, he knows that he must remain on earth and continue with the Philippians in progress and joy in faith.

Another major theme of Philippians is Paul's encouragement to imitate Christ's humility. He instructs the Philippians to be as humble and selfless as Christ and to consider others better than themselves. These instructions are based off of Christ Jesus's

actions, who made himself nothing despite being in very nature God. Paul dictates to the church that they must not complain or argue but instead shine like stars. He also brings to their attention that he intends to send Timothy, a humble and selfless brother in Christ, to Philippi. Also, since God had mercy on Epaphroditus, Paul is sending him, a fellow worker who nearly died for the work of Christ. Once again, Paul tells the Philippians to rejoice and welcome him with joy and honor.

Paul's advice and instructions continue when he tells the Philippians to rejoice and stand firm in the Lord. He acknowledges that brothers in Christ must glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh. Another encouragement he pens is that believers must strive toward the goal. This goal or prize is not an earthly item such as gold or jewels but instead eternity with Christ. Although many live in sin and worship of materialistic things, believers eagerly await eternity with the Savior, which is the one thing that brings true joy. Paul encourages the Philippians to strive for whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy in order to stand firm in the Lord.

The book of Philippians encourages believers to be joyful, humble, and strong in their faith. It is a book that rejoices and praises God, even though it was written during a time of pain and persecution. Despite his imprisonment, Paul encourages his brothers in Christ to remain joyful and continue towards the goal, which is eternity with Christ Jesus. The teachings of Philippians excite me in my walk with Christ, but they also convict me of one of the greatest sins I struggle with. Since pride is one of my biggest faults, Paul's instructions, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves" (Phil. 2:3) is personally extremely challenging. However,

with the wisdom of the teachings of Philippians in my mind, I strive to imitate Christ's humility and rejoice.

Lady of the Lamp  
Informative Research  
Written by a 10<sup>th</sup> Grade Student

On a cool spring morning amid the beautiful arches and rivers of Florence, Italy, a new-born baby cried and cooed. Florence Nightingale, named for the city of her birth, would become one of the most compassionate, caring, and considerate women ever to face a battlefield. She heard God calling her and determined to become educated so that she might do His will in her life. During the Crimean war she became the champion of the wounded and sick soldiers. After the war, she continued to serve her country and establish a School for Nursing in London. She would be known as The Lady of the Lamp to the soldiers she would one day care for.

On Feb. 7, 1837 when Florence was 17 years of age, she believed she heard the voice of God calling her. She knew He had given her a mission, possibly to help people, but it was not until nine years later she would discover what that mission was. Being born into a sophisticated and reputable family, she unfortunately could not work in a hospital as she so desired. She soon wanted more freedom. Florence, who consoled herself by reading about public health and different hospitals, soon became well-versed in the subject. While her friends insisted that she was an expert on the matter, she considered herself to be only a young woman following God's call. In 1864 one of her friends brought her some literature about a nursing school in Kaiserswerth, Germany. Finally with her parent's consent she joined the course and had obtained the position of Superintendent of Nurses in a women's hospital in Paris in 1853. So the sweet baby of Florence, Italy, grew up into a charming, God-fearing woman.

The Crimean war broke out. In March, 1854 she prayed that she would be able to lead a team of nurses to Constantinople where she would be able to fulfill God's call. Florence only asked to take three nurses to accompany her but out of care for his long-time friend, the secretary of war, Sidney Herbert, insisted upon her taking more. As Florence and her company of nurses stepped off the boat and walked into the monastery, which had been converted into a hospital, horror met their tired eyes. Men who were lying on the ground amid a sea of rats and fleas cried out for their help. Florence found some meager supplies and set to work. She chose several men that were well enough to clean, gave them some brushes, and set them to work tidying up the stench-filled hospital. Several days after they arrived, Florence started to write letters demanding more bandages, food, and cots for these gallant and homesick men who lay dying in such horrible conditions. Doctors grumbled and complained, saying that they "disliked the dictatorship of a woman." Surprisingly, after they saw the order and cleanliness of the hospital and the high moral of the soldiers, they realized that they were wrong in what they had said and willingly supplied all of Florence's demands. At night when the firing had died down, Florence would walk among the men with a lantern in one hand and would comfort and encourage them. They were lonely for mothers, wives, and sweet-hearts, but when she would speak to them, her words seemed like sweet drops of honey to them. It was during this war she became known as The Lady of the Lamp.

Finally the horrible war ended and the Florence returned to her tranquil home in London, England. When the people, who were extremely excited and exhilarated, heard of her return, they held celebrations in her honor. But Florence, ever humble and unassuming in her actions, chose not to attend them. Still weak from a previous illness,

she withdrew and rested quietly in her house in the heart of London. Being unable to go to the public, the public came to her. Influential people, such as governors, authors, and courtiers came to her for advice. Florence instigated the formation of the Royal Commission of the Health for the Army in 1857, which greatly improved the living conditions for British soldiers by giving them better rations and housing. In addition to her work in the army, she started the Nightingale School For Nursing. The King bestowed upon Florence the highest award of all. The British Order of Merit, and to add to that glorious honor, she was the first woman ever to receive it. Grievously, as years passed they began to take their toll on Florence. She soon completely lost her eyesight. The King offered her a formal burial in Westminster Abbey but Florence refused. She wanted to be buried in the family cemetery. The arrival of August 13, 1910 was met with tears and bitter sorrow as six British soldiers carried Florence to her final resting place. The entire country of England had already begun to miss their Lady of the Lamp.

Florence Nightingale was surely one of the most remarkable women of her time. From when she first heard the call of God, through her arduous years of war, and to the universal acclaim of her countrymen, Florence never wavered in her unceasing devotion to better the conditions of her fellow men. Most significantly, she rose above the limitations of her sex without ever losing the tremendous power of the nurturing, feminine nature. Being the first young woman to receive the highest honor offered in England, she unknowingly became a role model for many generations of young women and permanently ennobled the profession of nursing. Florence Nightingale was indeed a lady whose lamp still shines one hundred years later.

Religious Crisis in Nigeria  
Informative Research  
Written by a 10<sup>th</sup> Grade Student

Nigeria, Africa's most populous country, has 170 million people split into a large number of ethnic groups. The three largest ones are the Hausa-Fulani tribe, which dominates the north, the Yoruba tribe, which dominates the southwest, and the Igbo tribe, which dominates the southeast. Though many Nigerians practice traditional religions, most people are either Christians or Muslims, which creates a permanent wall between the people of Nigeria. Recently, there have been a number of church bombings, with the Muslim "Boko Haram" targeting the "infidel" Christians.

The reason for such a rift between the North and the South is by the way Nigeria was colonized. Before colonization, Nigeria was broken into tribes, who had their own religious traditions. In the North, however, the Muslim faith started to settle. If you look at the geographical map of Nigeria, the north is mostly desert. Because of this, the Arabs of the Sub-Saharan trade passed through this region and affected the culture and religion of the northerners. Now when the British colonized Nigeria in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, some of the tribes welcomed the Western traditions, opening their arms to Christianity. But the Muslim Nigerians in the north rejected their views. Just like the Arabs of the Middle East, they believed that Nigeria should not be part of this Western nonsense.

Another part of history that contributes to the conflict in Nigeria is the Civil War. This war caused so much tension between the people of Nigeria. In January of 1966, a coup d'état was enacted by some Igbos in the military. Because the attack seemed to target mostly Hausa political leaders, the Igbos started to provoke the northerners,

taunting of how the Igbos will rule Nigeria. As a result, the Hausa people massacred the Igbos who lived in the north, which then in turn caused the Igbo people to kill the Muslims in the south. Many innocent lives were lost on account of the pursuit of revenge. After all this bloodshed, the Igbo people finally threatened to secede from Nigeria on May 30<sup>th</sup>, 1967, calling their new nation Biafra. This erupted in a civil war between the Biafrans and the rest of Nigeria. This war lasted three long years, and many people suffered because of it. The military of Nigeria cut off the Igbos from any incoming supplies, which led to famine. There are many pictures of starving children who went through this terrible war. About three million people died as a result of this conflict, mostly from starvation and disease. The Igbo finally gave up their revolution, but to this day, the north and the south are unmistakably divided not just for religious reasons, but because they cannot accept and compromise living in one country together.

The influence of outside forces greatly affects what happens currently in the conflict between Christians and Muslims. Multiple church bombings have erupted in Nigeria, mainly organized by the “Congregation of the People of Tradition for Proselytism and Jihad,” the Islamic armed group that operates in northern Nigeria. Better known as the “Boko Haram” (which is the Hausa term), this group is most likely linked to Al-Qaeda. Because of the extremists in the Arab nations, the stiles and teachings have crossed over to Nigeria as well. Boko Haram was founded by Mohammed Yusuf, who believed that Western education was sinful. Since 2001, this group has been guilty of 3,000 to 10,000 deaths. The hatred of the West has led these kills to church bombings, freeing criminals, gun battles, and attacks that build up terror. On Christmas Eve of 2010, Boko Haram coordinated five simultaneous blasts in Jos, Nigeria. Two of these



explosions were at the Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church, where many people were attending worship. This attack killed at least 32 innocent people and injured an additional 74. Though clearly the victims, the Christians are not always blameless. After a bombing of a Catholic church, a Christian mob started stopping Muslims taxis and killed some of the drivers. The attacks between Muslims and Christians at first dwelled on how radical the Islamic faith leads Northerners to be. But now it seems that whenever a group is the majority, the other is oppressed. It is just endless revenge disguised as “fighting for your religion.”

The religious conflict in Nigeria is based mainly on two types of religion: Christianity and Islam. The Islamic faith is mostly concentrated in the north, while Christianity dwells in the south. There is a great rift between the north and the south, not just for religious differences, but also tribal diversity. Recently, there has been an outbreak of terror, with the Boko Haram trying to rid Nigeria of the “sinful” Western traditions, such as Christianity. As Christians seek revenge, it only makes the hole deeper, making Nigeria a country full of meaningless bloodshed. If things continue as they are, another war may be the undoing of this beautiful country.

“De-extinction”  
Informative Research  
Written by a 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Student

Woolly mammoths, saber-toothed cats, dodos, Tasmanian tigers, these names represent the past, biological relics only pictured through artistic rendering and faint sepia photographs. Now they represent something entirely different: the future. Technological innovations in biology and genetic engineering have made it very plausible that, given a few more years; these iconic Paleolithic creatures will live amongst us once again.

The questions surrounding this subject are numerous, and all of them present significant cases for and against such a monumental scientific undertaking. For some, the scientific feat in of itself is cause enough to charge ahead. In fact, scientists have already successfully bred a type of extinct mountain goat, locally called a *bucardo*, formally a Pyrenean Ibex...for roughly 10 minutes before it died of respiratory complications. The technology has not yet been perfected, obviously, but this breakthrough has hooked many scientists and conservationists alike in the hunt for de-extinction.

Another issue is where these creatures would find their homes. Would they be confined to a zoo or would it be possible to establish wild populations? Supporters of the latter have found a serious roadblock to this goal. Most of the species that have been driven extinct were killed off by the destruction of their habitat. An excellent example of this is the Carolina Parakeet, which was the only species of parrot native to the eastern United States. It was declared extinct due to a variety of reasons, including hunting (for its feathers for ladies' hats), and agricultural development, which destroyed much of its natural habitat. Even if a Carolina parakeet was successfully raised into fertile adulthood,

the forests that it called its home have been drastically reduced, even more so now than when it became extinct in 1939.

The next biggest roadblock in the way of de-extinction is whether or not the cloned animal would really be the animal that is described by its genome and DNA. For example, a woolly mammoth embryo that had been cloned would need a surrogate mother for it to be born, in this case, an African elephant. Some scientists have reason to believe that, while the baby will have the same DNA as, and look like a woolly mammoth; being raised by an African elephant mother would alter the baby's behavior from what a woolly mammoth might have *actually* acted like during its time. In response, scientists will test whether or not this will really happen by taking the embryo of a black rat and placing it into a surrogate *brown* rat. If the black rat grows up and acts like a brown rat in maturity, scientists may have to rethink their strategies.

Despite potential questions of ethics and setbacks, we stand to gain from the resurrection of extinct species. Consider it redemption for when human action, or inaction, has caused a species to vanish from this beautiful earth. Imagine taking your children to a zoo where towering mammoths and awe-inspiring saber-toothed cats will take your very breath away. We may not have to wait much longer, and extinction may cease to be a permanent consequence.

Robert Goddard  
Informative Research  
Written by a 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Student

On March 16, 1926 in Auburn, Massachusetts, the world's first liquid fueled rocket was successfully launched by Robert Goddard, one of the first men to seriously consider rockets as a practical way of space travel. The rocket traveled for 2.5 seconds at the speed of 60 mph and reached an altitude of 41 feet, landing 184 feet away. Robert Goddard, the creator of this historical rocket, is considered the father of modern rocket propulsion. At a young age, he was fascinated by the idea of ascending to great heights. This fascination pushed him to research and experiment with rockets for years, which in turn led to the construction of the first liquid fueled rocket. Robert Goddard also contributed many other concepts and inventions that advanced the science of rockets. He was a brilliant scientist who not only realized the potentialities of missiles and space flight but also helped bring them to practical realization.

On October 5, 1882, Robert Goddard was born to Nahum and Fannie Goddard in Worcester, Massachusetts. As a child, Robert suffered from pulmonary tuberculosis which prevented him from attending school for extended amounts of time. However, he kept up with his studies and spent many hours reading books that encouraged his ideas and love of science. Young Goddard was especially inspired by *The War of the Worlds* by H.G. Wells, and it proved to be a large contributor to his fascination with the world outside of earth. After graduating high school in 1904, Robert Goddard attended and graduated from Worcester Polytechnic Institute in 1908. However, he was almost expelled from the institute in 1907 when he set off a rocket powered by gun powder in the basement of the school. Instead of expulsion though, his teachers chose to give him

their attention and encouragement in the study of rockets. Goddard then attained his master's degree in 1910 and earned his doctorate in 1911. Three years later, Goddard began teaching physics at Clark University in Worcester where he started to seriously research and construct rockets.

Robert Goddard was one of the only men in his time who recognized that rockets were the only credible way of reaching distant space, and his research and dedication eventually led to the creation of the first fuel propellant rocket. In 1914, Goddard received two U.S. Patents. One was for a rocket that uses liquid fuel, and the other was for a two- or three-stage rocket using solid fuel. In 1915, he began his experiments using a ballistic pendulum which is a heavy mass suspended by ropes. He attached the rocket to the ropes, fired it, and calculated the momentum by observing the height to which it rose. During his studies at Clark University, Goddard theorized that the combination of liquid hydrogen and liquid oxygen would make an ideal propellant for a rocket. He presented many reports to the Smithsonian about his research, experiments, and theories in order to receive financial aid from them. By 1927, Goddard had received \$10,000 from the Smithsonian from his initial request for funds in 1916. However, the hard work and money that was dedicated to Goddard's theories paid off on March 16 of 1926 when Goddard successfully developed and shot the first liquid fuel propellant rocket. Powered by liquid oxygen and gasoline, it was the first rocket to ever be launched using liquid fuel. This monumental day is as significant in history as that of the Wright brothers at Kitty Hawk, and Goddard's research in rockets has been a major contributor to the field of space flight.

Not only did Robert Goddard invent the first liquid fueled rocket, he also contributed advances in missilery and space flight involving vacuums, vanes, and gyro control apparatus. Goddard recognized that rockets were the only practical way of reaching extreme altitudes or outer space, and in 1919 he was largely ridiculed by members of the media for this belief. Although these negative comments caused Goddard to retreat to a secluded environment, he continued to work and research his theories. One of the things that Goddard contributed to the field of spaceflight is the proof that a rocket will work in a vacuum. He proved that it needs no air to push against. Goddard also was the first person to use vanes in 1932 in the rocket motor blast for guidance. Another contribution of Goddard's is the development of gyro control apparatus for rocket flight. These are just a few of the numerous contributions the great mind of Robert Goddard gave to the world of rocket and space research.

Robert Goddard was both a creative scientist and a practical engineer in the science of space flight. His brilliant mind helped make space travel a reality, and his contributions and studies greatly advanced missilery and rocketry. The launch of the world's first liquid fuel propellant rocket in 1926 was a huge step in the field of space flight. As seen by his impressive studies and experimentation, Robert Goddard rightly deserves the name the "Father of Modern Rocket Propulsion".