

Portfolio Preview

Fourth Edition

Information about and Samples of
English 101 Portfolios from
Spokane Falls Community College



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FACULTY /PORTFOLIO PRE

Portfolio Preview

Fourth Edition

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Spokane Falls Community College

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Dear English 101 Student:

SFCC is committed to the idea that students must write clearly and effectively if they are to succeed in college and in the professional world. For that reason, composition instructors engage in a department-wide form of student evaluation called *portfolio assessment*. Since 1990, our English 101 students have assembled portfolios of their written work to demonstrate their mastery of collegiate writing. This assessment allows students to satisfy SFCC's writing requirement on the basis of their best writing, writing they've had a chance to think about and revise, and it helps English instructors to increase the consistency of their grading.

At midterm and quarter's end, your work will be read by *other* English instructors to determine whether your writing meets minimum standards for completing English 101 with a C. At midterm, we read a single essay as a "dry run" to inform you of the standards we apply. In the final portfolio, we read three essays: 1) a descriptive, narrative or explanatory essay; 2) an analytic or persuasive essay relying on sources documented in the MLA style; and 3) an impromptu essay to ensure your mastery of focus, organization, and the Standard English idiom of formal writing. Revised papers have a cover sheet describing the writing assignment, what you regard as successful in the essay, and your writing process.

When English faculty meet to read portfolios, they decide which ones meet the department's standards of competency. To earn a C (2.0) or higher in the course, your portfolio must pass. *You may not enroll in an advanced composition class (English 102 or 105) with a C-*. If your portfolio passes, you are not guaranteed a C; your grade is affected by other factors such as missing assignments, poor attendance, late or unsatisfactory work. It is therefore essential that you observe the policies your instructor outlines on the syllabus.

Although most of us dislike the sword of judgment hanging over our heads, many students have enjoyed receiving recognition for the papers they have created and polished during the quarter from a teacher who reads them with a fresh eye. Still, students are bound to be a bit nervous about their writing, so we have assembled this collection of SFCC portfolios and reader commentary on them. These anonymous portfolios are published exactly as they were submitted – mistakes and all – and with the writers' permission. We hope you find these examples instructive since they provide local rather than textbook examples of polished writing, a sense of the audience who reads your portfolio, and the criteria used to assess your writing.

We believe that department-wide evaluation benefits you. Students are well served when they learn to write for a particular audience and reflect on that achievement. Students are well served when faculty agree about what constitutes good college writing. The enterprise of higher education is well served when the participants talk openly about performance standards and when teachers help learners discover how to meet those standards for themselves. We are happy you share this learning enterprise with us!

Sincerely,

Jared Anthony, Ph.D.
Director of Composition

Alexis Nelson, Ph.D.
English Department Chair

Portfolio #1: Exemplary

Please type or print.

What was the writing assignment? (Use your teacher's words or attach the assignment.)

So far in class, we have studied and practiced active reading strategies, as well as the formulative aspects of essay writing, such as the importance of audience, topic, purpose, and effective thesis statements in essay arrangement. We have also learned some new strategies for descriptive writing, such as sensory detail and imagistic language. Choose one of the following prompts and narrow the subject to a specific topic about which you can write a detailed 3-6 page essay. Remember: try to challenge yourself with your topic; a writer who surprises herself often surprises the audience. In other words, your essay will be more interesting to read if it was interesting to write. (Each student chose his or her own topic from a list of prompts.)

The prompt I chose was:

Write an essay about an activity you find central to your state of being. It might be a hobby a service to others, or an athletic pursuit which gives you physical and emotional balance.

Please describe what you consider most successful in this paper.

I used careful word choices and sensory language to create vivid descriptions and word pictures. I also employed a lot of descriptive humor to keep the anecdotal format engaging. The dominant impression was intriguing because it offered an alternative, positive meaning for a common negative term.

Please describe your writing process. For example, what editorial help did you have, from whom, what changes did you make?

This essay was read and reviewed by a fellow student during our in-class peer revision session. I also received editorial advice from my husband and mother. I instituted several small changes based on advice from all three of them, but no large changes were suggested.

Drama Queen

Every woman alive has had the accusation hurled at her at least once. She probably felt it was an unjustly bestowed appellation, and resentfully stewed in her certainty that anyone else suffering her manic hormones and her treacherously difficult day would have behaved in the same manner that she did, and thus the title is hardly deserved. She sulks over the indignity of her perceived insult. But not I. No, I wear it proudly like a badge of honor when someone announces to me, “You are such a drama queen!”

I have been enthralled by the performing arts for longer than my memory can reach into my past. As a toddler, I dressed up in my mother’s “old fashioned” clothes, reveling in the long, flowing dresses, and jewelry that was outdated but timeless. Of course, the dresses were so very long and flowing on my tiny frame that they had to be pinned and tied up all around, resulting in the impression of a dwarf in thrift store castoffs. That never mattered to me; I felt beautiful and sophisticated. I would entice my little sister with tempting images of fame and splendor until I gained her full cooperation, and she obediently trailed after me around the “stage” that was our bedroom, dutifully lisping the words with which I prompted her. After two or three rehearsals that inevitably turned out to all be completely different from each other, yet still wonderfully professional in my mind, I would run to my parents, beaming and announcing that we had a “play” to perform for them. They sat, bowed uncomfortably in half to fit onto the bottom bunk of our bunk beds, with an appearance of enjoyment as they watched our fumbled dialogue and attempts not to trip on our long skirts, and always offered up an enthusiastic round of applause and praise when we concluded with proud, sweeping bows. What can I say? They loved us.

As I grew older and my friends all developed the requisite crushes on gorgeous actors and actresses, all I could imagine was how divine it would feel to exist in the shoes of those marvelous beings and to live their enchanted lives. I fantasized about their lives and theatrical experiences rather than their faces and physiques, until my friends gave me up as a lost cause. Late nights were spent locked in the bathroom where one wall was covered by a large mirror, pacing back and forth and gesturing dramatically as I attempted to recreate scenes out of a movie I had just watched. I had long outgrown my dress up days, and my mother could once again claim sole ownership of her wardrobe; now my obsession was with the finer details of the craft. I devoured our small town library's entire selection of books on the performing arts. One week stage make up was my fixation, and my family charitably pretended not to notice the over eager application of powder and paint that made me look like more like an amateur clown than a stage diva. Another week I tried to learn the art of fake crying for my dramatic endeavors, and spent anxious hours peering hopefully into the mirror for any sign of moistness around my stubbornly arid eyes while I fervently thought as many sad thoughts as I could. I knew I had mastered it the day that I stunned a hapless lady in the grocery store by successfully bursting into a torrent of tears at no more provocation than an innocent stand of green peppers.

When I was sixteen years old, I happened upon something that thrilled every theatrical bone in my body: a small community theatre in a town near us that required more enthusiasm than talent, and thus was pleased to welcome me into the magical world that I had longingly worked toward for so many years. At last I would walk a real stage and feel the dizzying excitement of the bright lights shining right on me! It was almost the Christmas season, and as our theatre prepared a Christmas musical I drifted through my days in a happy haze, hardly believing that I was finally living a piece of my dream, but eagerly embracing every experience.

I blissfully memorized lines, songs, and dances, practicing hours beyond what I needed just because I was in love with the process of rehearsing. Costume selections brought an agony of decisions, and dozens of times I posed for the mirror in concoctions that made my mother's "old fashioned" selections look stylish, considering everything that could possibly be impacted by my choice. Would this color look washed out under the lights? Would that outfit be too constrictive of my movements when I danced? I learned so much about stage make up from those who actually knew what they were doing, and my cheeks turned a very authentic pink under my applied blush when I examined the finished product in the mirror and remembered my ill educated attempts at home in previous years. Finally all exciting preparations were completed.

Opening night. Those words still send a thrill shooting down my spine, and the night that I experienced my very first opening I was enraptured by absolutely everything. I arrived at the theatre two full hours before curtain time, giddy with excitement over the prospect of performing before my first real audience. The backstage workers helped me into my first costume, and I sat with patient, restrained anticipation while my hair and make up were painstakingly completed. I vaguely enjoyed the backstage chatter of the other performers during the final few minutes of preparations, but my mind was elsewhere. I focused in on the image of a little girl with a beaming smile who was all dressed up in clothes far too big for her, chirping out made up conversations for her bunk bed audience. Moments later, as the lights blinked on and the heavy velvet curtain slowly rose, that little girl inside me rose as well, in joyful recognition that the moment she had been blindly reaching for all those years ago had finally arrived. The audience melded into one enormous pair of eyes for a brief moment as my heart skipped a beat or two with sudden nerves, then smoothed back out into multiple shadowy faces that actually were not frightening at all as long as the blinding stage lights shone in my eyes. And quite miraculously,

all those people were not crumpled into a bunk bed, but lounged comfortably in seats that they had purchased for the night, sitting on the other side of the lights and watching me! My fantasy took one giant leap that night and became fabulously real.

I still love the theatre and the performing arts. The more I learn about the wonderful and varied possibilities of the world of drama, the more infatuated I become. My experiences thus far have included singing, speaking, and dancing roles, including a lead role that required the mastery of an authentic British accent, which was a great and enjoyable challenge. I look forward to discovering what other dramatic adventures lie in wait for me, and hope to have endless opportunities still ahead of me to come alive beneath the blinding, beautiful lights of the stage. Other women may grumble and mutter to themselves when they are accused of being a “drama queen”, but as far as I am concerned, to actually deserve to be labeled with that hard earned title is one of my greatest goals.

Please type or print.

What was the writing assignment? (Use your teacher's words or attach the assignment.)

RESEARCH-AIDED ARGUMENTATIVE: For your next essay, you will choose a controversial /debatable topic and write a 3-5 page argumentative essay. Be sure that you make use of inductive and/or deductive reasoning and that you avoid logical fallacies. You will need to formulate a thesis statement (statement of opinion) and supporting examples as well as conduct some minor research in order to find evidence for those supporting examples. You will be required to use at least five resources, at least two of which must be internet sources, two much be print sources, and one must represent “the other side” of the issue you are arguing. Be sure tat your sources are credible and reliable. Your paper should be in MLA format (see your handbook for guidelines) and should contain proper citation, including a works cited list which should be attached as the last page of your essay (the works cited list does affect the total page count).

Please describe what you consider most successful in this paper.

I think I presented a lot of information very clearly, and strongly support my thesis. I take a strong and interesting position and do not fail it.

Please describe your writing process. For example, what editorial help did you have, from whom, what changes did you make?

This essay went through many stages of drafting and revision. I received help from classmates in 2 peer revision sessions, enlisted my husband’s editorial assistance, and looked at it in my student/teacher conference. The biggest change I made was to reduce the intensity of my approach in my introduction, so I would not alienate my readers before providing back-up for my claims.

“Ashes, Ashes, We All Fall Down”

Everyone notices a pregnant woman. Our eyes are drawn by the gently swelling stomach, the slightly swaying walk...and increasingly likely these days, by the cigarette dangling shamelessly between her lips. Current statistics show that at least 11 percent of women in the United States smoke during pregnancy, and that despite increasing education and national awareness of the dangers associated with prenatal smoking, those numbers continue to rise (“March of Dimes”). This creates an unacceptable menace for unborn children who are incapable of protecting themselves from the effects of smoking on their developing bodies and minds. Due to the medically undeniable health hazards created for unborn babies when pregnant women smoke, smoking while pregnant should be viewed by society as a form of child abuse.

What exactly is physically harmful about cigarette smoke? Even a cursory examination of the components of cigarettes reveals that nearly every chemical and ingredient involved is dangerous and harmful to humans. The National Cancer Institute published a study in 2001 which detailed those components and their effects, though excluding the agricultural chemicals and pesticides often present in cigarettes “because of the many variations in the nature and amount of these agents in tobacco from country to country and from year to year”. The rest of the list includes such ingredients as carbon monoxide, ammonia, cyanide, sulfide, and phenol, among dozens of others. Some of these components are more commonly recognized as the fumes from car exhaust and household cleaning chemicals. Irritation and obstruction of the respiratory tract, as well as promotion of cancerous tumors, are among the main effects of these agents on

humans. Cigarettes are recognized, even by those who smoke them, as the often deadly cause of lung cancer and serious respiratory problems.

For babies in utero, the results of their mothers smoking can be just as deadly for them. Their immune systems are attacked and compromised during their very formation by what amounts to secondhand smoke. Dr. Shonag McKenzie is a hospital consultant who works with pregnant women and specializes in this area. “Babies die because their mothers smoke,” she explains. “That is a reality in my day-to-day life.” Smoking during pregnancy is the largest preventable cause of miscarriages and stillbirths (Nelson). A recent study states that “babies of mothers who smoke during pregnancy may undergo withdrawal-like symptoms similar to those seen in babies of mothers who use...illicit drugs,” and also that “babies whose mothers smoked during pregnancy are up to three times as likely to die from sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) as babies of nonsmokers...Smoking cigarettes [also] appears to double a woman’s risk of developing placental problems. These include placenta previa (low-lying placenta that covers part or all of the opening of the uterus) and placental abruption (in which the placenta peels away, partially or almost completely, from the uterine wall before delivery). Both can result in heavy bleeding during delivery that can endanger mother and baby” (“March of Dimes”). Many babies of smoking moms are born prematurely, with underdeveloped lungs that are not able to handle life outside the womb. High percentages of these babies contract pneumonia in their weak lungs and subsequently spend weeks fighting for their lives – sometimes unsuccessfully – in pediatric intensive care units. Additionally, babies whose mothers smoke while they are pregnant usually have a low birth weight, which is defined as five pounds eight ounces or less. This can result in further complications during labor and delivery for both mother and baby.

For the newborns who do survive this harrowing array of possible bad outcomes, the negative effects of smoking during pregnancy continue to affect children well past birth. The March of Dimes study found that “premature and low-birth weight babies face an increased risk of serious health problems during the newborn period, chronic lifelong disabilities (such as cerebral palsy, mental retardation and learning problems) and even death.” Those chronic lifelong disabilities listed are severe and devastating, not minor irritations like frequent colds. They also have serious economic consequences for all of society, as well as the obvious emotional and other painful consequences for the individual children and families involved. Childhood asthma and other breathing problems are additional issues that are common in children whose mothers smoked while they were pregnant.

The simplest federal definition of child abuse is, “Any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker, which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse, or exploitation, or an act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm” (“Child Welfare Information Gateway”). This definition clearly applies to smoking during pregnancy, in light of the extensive risks of physical harm inflicted on the babies that are subjected to it. The numerous deaths of infants through miscarriage, stillbirth, and SIDS as a result of their mothers smoking should have every U.S. lawmaker racing to criminalize the act. The phrase “an act...which presents an imminent risk of serious harm” within the definition means that this is applicable to every woman who makes the choice to smoke during her pregnancy, whether or not her baby is one of the large numbers of those who do actually experience severe physical harm or death, because she is still exposing it to very high risks.

Pregnant women who smoke throughout their pregnancy may claim that any attempt to interfere with their smoking activity would be a violation of constitutional rights to privacy. Law

professor John Banzhaf believes, however, that “once a woman has chosen to give birth rather than to abort, she has no constitutional right to endanger the fetus’ health.” Banzhaf further notes that “[a pregnant woman’s] so-called privacy rights are inextricably bound up with the right of the child not to be subjected to dangerous unnecessary health risks, if not death itself” (“Action on Smoking and Health”). A woman who wishes to exercise her right to smoke as well as her right to have a child is morally free to do both at separate times in her life, but she crosses a clear line into child abuse if she attempts to do them simultaneously.

No responsible U.S. citizen would consider excusing a parent who smothered their child or baby with a pillow, starved or beat them, or otherwise caused them physical harm or death. Smoking during a pregnancy is in the same class as these actions, because it is clearly dangerous not only to a baby’s health, but to its very life. Women who subject their unborn children to this form of abuse and its dire ramifications need to be prosecuted for their actions. It is imperative that this society, the U.S. government, and the criminal justice system immediately recognize this activity for the blatant and inexcusable child abuse that it is, and that they create and enforce the necessary legislation to eradicate it.

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Fall 2007 Final Impromptu Essay

Directions: This quarter we've been reading essays from the text *Holding Common Ground: The Individual and Public Lands in the American West*. For your final impromptu essay, choose ONE of the following prompts. No matter which you choose, be sure to narrow your focus to a clear thesis statement, and write a well-supported, efficiently organized, articulate essay.

Circle the prompt you write from, and attach this sheet to your essay.

1. Identify one of the common themes found throughout *Holding Common Ground*. Choose 2-4 essays that you find most compelling to exemplify that theme, and write an essay in which you explain the connection.

2. In *Holding Common Ground*, many of the essays utilize tried and true structure and style techniques in order to make their points clear, with form or layout of the essay often matching the content. Identify one such technique, 2-4 essays which make use of it, and write an explication.

3. A few of you this quarter have mentioned being "turned off" by some of the essays in *Holding Common Ground*. Identify a clear reason (for example, tone, subject, or use of political language), as well as a few essays in which it happens, and write a critical analysis.

4. *Holding Common Ground* ultimately proposes that we as humans need to find common ground in order to preserve our last wild spaces and protect this planet for our children's futures, whether that common ground be reached through indirect means, such as education, or more direct avenues, such as citizen activism. There are a plethora of ways we could affect change here in Spokane. Choose one essay from *HCG* which addresses this topic, and connect it to a solution you propose for our local community.

A Little Child Shall Lead Them

Environmentalism is a political issue. There is no denying this fact, as legislation is frequently put into place and laws are passed that are intended to monitor and govern people's interaction with the environment. Environmental activist groups speak on political platforms and their voices are influential in many government forums. In fact, environmentalism has become so interwoven with politics on so many levels that people often cringe when the topic is introduced in public for fear of the political debates that will almost inevitably follow. For some of us, however, the words "environmental awareness" could flash in neon color from every politician's lips, and they would still bring first to mind a simple friendship and appreciation that we first learned to share with the world around us when we were children. Many of the essays in Holding Common Ground pay homage to the sweet simplicity of this kind of awareness of our environment, and acknowledge the tremendous guiding power it can wield over our attitudes and actions.

"White Sands Missile Range" displays a beautifully graphic enjoyment of some of the earthiest aspects of the earth. "Smell this leaf. Listen to that bird. Fall in love" (page 16), it exhorts us. This is the approach of a pure hearted little child delighting in the great outdoors, the most enchanted play place available. Children playing outside become happily and intimately acquainted with dirt, with sticks and leaves, and with sand and streams. They swing like tail-less monkeys from the friendly branches of trees, roll madly down grassy hills until their breath comes in short happy spurts, and then fall back onto the ground to gaze up into the sky with wondering eyes that find elephants and ice cream cones in the clouds. In "White Sands Missile

Range” we are encouraged to return to that visceral connection that we had with the earth as children, and to revel in the oneness that we can then feel with nature. The author attempts a few times in the essay to address some political issues, and to explain away the depth of the described emotion by attributing it to the political cause of environmentalism. In conclusion, however, she acknowledges her helplessness to do anything but care deeply about the environment with the concession, “...maybe we have already fallen in love, and it is just that simple” (17).

Later in the book, “The Troubling Dawn” steps up to the political plate to rant and plead for action regarding uranium mines, one of so many decried threats to the environment. Yet before the author makes her political points, we discover that she, too, has fallen in that simple childlike love with the world around her, and it is that which drives her. It is with near reverence that she describes the charm and allure of the piece of land she is fighting to protect. “We drew our water from the ground and ate the bounty of the land,” she reminisces. “[We knew] the comforting crackle of a warming fire, the laugh of coyotes in snow-filled winter nights, the chatter of chipmunks, and the rhythm of woodpeckers pounding nearby trees” (104). Reading the words of this essay, our heartbeats relax back into the less harried pace of childhood and the snow-filled winter nights. Like children who are unafraid to throw themselves into the cold, wet snow to make snow angels, this author revels in the close corporeal connection she felt with the earth while she lived so in tune with nature.

Is this artless love of nature’s gifts beautiful because of its simplicity, or is it actually simple because it is so beautiful? Whichever way each of our hearts answers that question, certainly it seems clear that the depth of emotion involved in this kind of ingenuous appreciation of nature can motivate and sustain far greater environmental activism than can any elaborate

political foundation. It is inspiring that Holding Common Ground highlights several authors who unabashedly depict their own intense childlike love of the environment, and credit that love with convincing them, as it can for all of us, that this earth is magical and worth preserving.

Faculty Comments on Portfolio #1

The portfolio readers felt that this collection of essays qualified as exemplary, for a variety of reasons. The major collective reason, though, was consistency. The writer has developed strong writing skills and has utilized them in all three papers presented.

Narrative Essay: One reader commented that she felt that the writer was initially dazzled by her own vocabulary, but her voice became more natural as the writing progressed. It was noted there are both style and content, as well as well-developed paragraphs. She really engages the reader with her story.

Documented Persuasive Essay: Facts are presented, and they are followed by analysis. The argument itself is convincing and well supported, though it was noted that one of the assignment requirements, that the counter-argument should be supported by research, is not followed. However, the writer does, indeed, present this argument. There is a strong controlling idea (thesis), paragraphs have identifiable topic sentences, and there is evidence that is logical and well integrated. MLA format is correct, as well.

Impromptu Essay: This is a well-developed essay, all the more striking because the writer chose a very challenging topic. She identifies an interesting theme and sticks to it. The thesis is clear and controls the paper. One of the portfolio readers called it “a delight to read.” The title is appropriate, and that idea does appear in the paper. It was also noted that quotes are well integrated.

In all of these essays, readers noted that the writer’s voice is fabulous, and they also remarked on her sophisticated sentences, meaning that there is a variety of language, punctuation, and sentence length. All of these essays have structure and controlling ideas. This writer picked challenging topics and became fully engaged with the issues.

Portfolio #2: Good

Please type or print.

What was the writing assignment? (Use your teacher's words or attach the assignment.)

Essay #2 assignment:

Occasion: As we continue our academic inquiry into this year's Campus-Wide Theme, which is Sustainability: Promoting a Livable Future, your second essay assignment will give us the opportunity to read, discuss, and respond to a contemporary article that touches on many environmental issues, in particular, Darcy Frey's article, "How Green Is BP?" in our *Listening to Earth* anthology.

Writing Task: After reading Frey's article and discussing it in class, write your own "Summary and Response" essay.

- To accomplish the body of your essay, you'll first write a summary of Frey's article (which will take a couple of paragraphs) in which you fairly and impartially represent the significant ideas he presents in his essay. Do not add your own ideas to the summary; rather, present only Frey's ideas in this part of your essay. Be sure to use acknowledgement phrases to make it clear to the reader that the ideas you present are not your own but are those of Frey.
- In the second part of the body of your essay, develop and refine your ideas to some part or parts of what Frey discusses in his essay. Write at least two paragraphs in which you develop your own ideas in response to Frey's ideas.

Audience: Fellow classmates but also other English teachers who will not have your familiarity with Frey's essay. Therefore, you'll have to summarize Frey's essay effectively, which will contextualize your response. Both your classmates and your potential portfolio readers will be interested in what thoughts you have in response to Frey's claims.

Purpose:

To get you to think about issues related to sustainability.

To give you the opportunity to practice summarizing and paraphrasing source material.

To develop your own thoughts in response to what you read.

To give you experience distinguishing your ideas from those of others in your writing.

Essay Length: 3-4 pages plus a Works Cited page, double-spaced, using 12-point font

Please describe what you consider most successful in this paper.

I think my summary of Frey's article is the most successful element in my essay. My summary presents all of Frey's main ideas in a concise way. I feel I accurately presented Frey's opinions in my own words and in an interesting and expressive way.

Please describe your greatest challenge in writing this essay and what you did to overcome that challenge.

My greatest challenge in writing this essay was summarizing Frey's work in my own words. It is very easy for me to unconsciously use the author's words instead of my own. To overcome this, I read through Frey's essay several times, underlining the key points. I then put the book away and wrote the summary without looking at it. When I was finished writing in my own words, I looked back at Frey's article to make sure I hadn't copied his wording.

Green or Greed?

When was the last time you carpooled, recycled newspapers, or purchased organic food in an effort to help the environment? In recent years, we have become more aware of the delicate ecosystem of the earth we live on and are making great efforts to preserve it. With technically-advanced equipment that measures levels of chemicals in the air, ground, and water, alarming new discoveries are being made. Take, for example, the ozone hole or the issue of global warming. Perhaps one of the most controversial topics is that of oil production and consumption. In “How Green is BP?,” Darcy Frey discusses British Petroleum’s (BP) recent advertising campaign in an effort to show its environmental awareness. Frey explains the efforts BP has made toward creating a better environment, but he also points out inconsistencies in the company’s claims; Frey’s article makes me think about how dependent we are on oil and reminds me of other companies who market potentially harmful products in an appealing fashion.

Frey begins his article by describing how BP, one of the largest oil companies in the world, has tried to brighten its image by raising awareness about environmental issues. He explains that the company, led by chief executive Lord John Brown, began its quest toward environmental friendliness when it created the slogan “Beyond Petroleum” and began promoting renewable sources of energy. At a time when the world is more earth-conscience than ever, BP is risking an enormous advertising campaign on the pretense of global advancement. Frey lists some of BP’s involvements, which include releasing bald eagles into the wild, supporting fuel-cell research, experimenting with alternative energy sources, and joining Claussen’s Business Environmental Leadership Council. In 1998, BP publicly announced it would cut down its green-

house emissions, immediately proceeded to work towards this goal, and succeeded well ahead of schedule. BP bought Solarex in 1999, and Brown claims he has big plans for the future. But Frey goes on to point out that no matter how hard BP tries, it will always be an oil company, involved in an industry that “scars the earth, pollutes the air and eventually warms the planet” (152).

Frey then elaborates on some inconsistencies in BP’s campaign. He remarks that the company seems to find it necessary to defend its status as an oil company by ending advertisements with “It’s a Start” (151). Frey also points out that as oil sources continue to diminish, BP’s production is dramatically reduced. Desperate times call for desperate measures, and the company is currently trying to obtain access to oil reserves in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. The land is indeed rich in oil, but it is also home to thousands of arctic animals. Frey questions why BP is promoting what some would refer to as an “industrial rape of an unspoiled wilderness” if the company is for global enhancement (157). In Frey’s opinion, BP has backed itself into a corner. Frey asks the question, “How can a company that digs big holes in the ground possibly advertise itself as a sensitive steward of the environment?” (152). He states that it is hypocritical to advocate new sources of energy and at the same time produce vast amounts of oil. In Frey’s opinion, BP is no better than other companies, with or without its heroic efforts.

One topic Frey’s article makes me think about is how dependent we are on oil as an energy source. Oil has been the main fuel source for heating and transportation for many years. In the past years we have become more aware of harmful CO₂ put out by the burning of oil. Judging from the price of gas, oil supplies are diminishing faster than we may realize. It is inevitable that the oil reserves will eventually be used up and alternative forms of energy must then be utilized. Renewable energy sources include solar, wind, and nuclear power, fossil fuels,

and natural gas. Great progress toward refining these raw materials has been made, but, as yet, none compare to oil in efficiency, price, and convenience. It may be decades before these various forms of energy can be refined to the point of being practical for daily use. The bottom line is that until a comparable form of energy is discovered, we will continue to rely on oil.

Frey's article also reminds me of other companies who have marketed potentially harmful products to make them appear more appealing. Take, for example, the tobacco industry. Companies like Marlboro use catchy phrases and ads that emphasize the "feel-good" effects of smoking to appeal to consumers. In reality, smoking creates a higher risk for heart attacks and cancer, both of which are leading causes of death in the United States. Another example is that of the alcohol industry. Budweiser is noted for its advertising endeavors that include elaborate billboards and humorous TV commercials. But 40% of traffic deaths in the United States are caused by drunk drivers. Some may conclude that these companies are evil for marketing harmful products in appealing ways. In my opinion, these companies are simply doing what they must to survive. If they openly advertised their products as harmful, disgusting products, they would get minimal business. I also think BP's embracement of a critical issue today is a smart move. I feel there is no reason to slam companies like these for their marketing tactics.

In "How Green is BP?," Darcy Frey does an excellent job of detailing BP's advertising campaign and pointing out some of the flaws. He was careful to portray both the positive and negative sides of BP, so the reader can form his own opinions about the company. But the question still remains—was BP's campaign really a selfless effort toward creating a cleaner earth or was it simply a selfish act to increase business? Some people may feel that because BP's business endeavors were inconsistent with its "Beyond Petroleum" campaign, the company was simply out to make more money. In my opinion, the difference BP has made far outweighs any

increase in profits. Unlike other oil companies, BP has made great efforts to clean up its act, and I respect that. I hope others will give BP the credit it deserves, instead of slandering the company. I believe BP's campaign was not simply a greedy, money-making scheme, but rather a crucial move at a time when efforts like these can make a difference.

Work Cited

Frey, Darcy. "How Green is BP?" Listening to Earth. Ed. Christopher Hallowell and Walter Levy. New York: Pearson Longman, 2005. 149-60.

Please type or print.

What was the writing assignment? (Use your teacher's words or attach the assignment.)

Essay #4 (persuasive argument)

Writing Task: For your final essay, you will write a persuasive argument on the same topic you wrote your report on (related to sustainability), and this time you will take a stand on the issue and support it with a persuasive argument. No more remaining neutral. Now that you have informed yourself on the topic of your choice, you can form and defend your opinion on the issue. Your thesis will be articulated as your opinion on the subject, and your argument will include topic sentences stated as reasons in support of your opinion, and you'll support these topics with plenty of information and sound logic. Use the information you gathered for your informative report to develop and support your reasons.

Be sure that your paper's focus is narrow enough so that your argument can be made convincing in 3-4 pages (excluding the works cited page), and make use of at least 2 quality, reliable sources in your paper (the same ones you used for your informative report, and perhaps you'll want to add another to help you develop your argument). Credit your sources by naming them in your paper and by using in-text citations with a works cited page, following MLA conventions.

Audience: Your audience is your group mates, your instructor, and other SFCC English faculty who may read your final portfolio, so your goal is both to generate interest in your subject and to persuade your audience that your opinion is valid and worthy of respect.

Essay Length: 3-4 pages plus a Works Cited page, double-spaced, using 12-point font

Please describe what you consider most successful in this paper.

I think my introduction paragraph is the most successful part of my essay. I attempted to generate interest with my hook, and I hope it will entice readers to continue reading.

Please describe your greatest challenge in writing this essay and what you did to overcome that challenge.

My greatest challenge in writing this essay was narrowing the focus of the paper. There was so much information that I wanted to include, but I had to condense it into a 4-page essay. To overcome this challenge, I tried to give an overall view of the topic without going into too much detail in any of the paragraphs.

The True Colors of Genetically Engineered Foods

Do you remember the beautiful, red, poisoned apple in “Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs?” Just like this apple, much of the food we eat today has been genetically altered to make it last longer and look better. For the typical American, processed foods constitute a significant part of the diet. Some examples of foods that contain genetically altered products are pasta, margarine, canola oil, chips, peanut butter, biscuits, and ice cream. The same technology used in cloning is now producing wonder-foods that are virtually immune to insects and drought. Although genetically engineered (GE) foods are becoming increasingly popular, studies show that GE foods cause many health and environmental problems, and an effort should be made to establish guidelines and safeguards that minimize the risks.

One thing that makes GE foods risky is the fact that so many people are unaware of both the process of genetic engineering and the widespread growth of GE foods. The painstaking process of synthesizing GE foods is basically the same as that used in cloning. Jeffrey Smith, writer for Rachel’s Democracy & Health News, explains the process of altering crop seeds. A gene that has been genetically altered in a laboratory to improve certain properties is inserted into a seed. The inserted gene is usually a bacteria cell that enhances certain properties of the seed. For example, a gene from *Bacillus Thuringiensis* might be inserted into a cotton seed to prevent insect damage (Smith). Carol Milano, contributor to Current Health 2, explains that corn, soybeans, cotton, and alfalfa are just a few of the many crops that are being genetically altered today. Although most people don’t realize it, Milano says that about 70% of processed foods in the US have been genetically modified in some way (Milano). However, most products containing GE components are not labeled, so consumers do not know what they are eating

(Smith). According to a recent study, only 26% of Americans are aware that they most likely consume GE foods daily (Milano). Today, when genetically engineered foods are at the top of the game in the food-science industry, it is surprising how unformed consumers are about GE foods.

Another danger is that the apparent benefits of GE foods make the products seem very safe and beneficial. Crop seeds can supposedly be safely modified to suit specific needs. Terri Teuber, a spokesperson for USDA, claims that “genetically engineered crops can tolerate drought conditions and herbicides, resist insects and viruses, and provide enhanced quality and nutrition for consumers” (Milano). If GE foods really are as beneficial as manufacturers make them out to be, much good could be done for our environment. For example, seeds modified to withstand frigid conditions would be very useful in regions that experience early freezing. Other seeds could be altered to grow in dry climates or less-than-ideal soil. Essential vitamins and proteins could be inserted into the seeds, which would be very beneficial in third-world countries where some vitamins are scarce and expensive. There are hopes that GE crops of the future will provide medicine and vaccines to people who are unable to afford health care. Because many GE crops are modified to resist pests, the need to spray pesticides is reduced. Since most sprays are highly toxic, this could mean a cleaner, healthier environment. A decrease in insecticides and sprays also eliminates the need to plow crops under every year, which could reduce soil erosion immensely (“Genetically”). But in reality, the many benefits of GE foods present a false façade that deceives many people.

The many health problems and safety concerns genetically engineered foods have raised are alarming. According to Kirk Azevedo, a former employee at Monsanto, the process of inserting genes into seeds causes mutations in the cell DNA which can sometimes be deadly. The genetic process forms extra proteins not normally seen in the plants. Azevedo states that certain

“folded proteins” can cause diseases like Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, which is closely related to mad cow disease. Although this phenomenon has not specifically been observed in GE seeds, researchers agree that it is a very likely possibility (Smith). Jane Rissler, director at the Union of Concerned Scientists in Washington, D.C., declares that “crops created to kill insects or resist weed killers have not been engineered to be healthier for people” (Milano). In several documented cases, livestock feeding on GE crops contracted strange diseases and died. Numerous farm workers and field laborers have suffered allergic reactions to GE crops, with some even being hospitalized. When one GE cotton variety was planted, acres of crops had problems like root deformities. Scientists have reported cases in which GE crops have cross-pollinated with other crops to contaminate them as well. Even more health problems are likely to show up in the future as some diseases can remain undetected for 10 to 30 years (Smith). These are just a few of the many concerns associated with GE foods.

It is clear that something should be done about the problem of the undisclosed prevalence of GE foods. Does it seem strange that the main entities behind the push for GE foods are the companies that are manufacturing the seeds? These companies claim to have great plans for the future, with goals to “reduce waste, decrease poverty, and help the world” (Smith). But are these companies really out for the greater good of the people or are they simply trying to make money? According to Gregory Jaffe, a director at the Center for Science in the Public Interest, the US should exercise more caution regarding the distribution of GE foods (Milano). Our country is essentially distributing potentially harmful products to unsuspecting civilians. The US is one of the few countries who even allow GE foods to be produced and marketed. Countries such as England and Japan have wisely banned GE foods until further research regarding the safety of the products has been conducted. Thankfully, similar efforts have begun in the US. Individuals at the Institute for Responsible Technology and those involved in the Good Food Movement are

just some of the many people who are working to put a stop to genetic engineering of food products (Smith). It is time for all of us to step in and fight for the health and safety of humankind.

In an age of discovery, GE foods are a breakthrough, and, given adequate safeguards and testing, great things could be accomplished. Many proclaim that GE foods have been very beneficial and can be used to help change the world. It is true that in our poverty-stricken world today a life-saving food is immensely welcome, but there is sadly much evidence that GE foods are not the lifesaver we are looking for. In my opinion, GE foods have the capability of doing much more harm than good. An epidemic is not what our country needs. Instead of continuing to manufacture and market products that are potentially harmful, I believe we should first focus on establishing guidelines and safeguards we can live with.

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Impromptu Essay Assignment #1

Choose one of the following options.

Option 1: We're now close to the mid-point of the quarter—a good time for you to pause and consider all of the classes you're taking at SFCC this quarter

and identify for yourself 3 of the most important things that you've learned so far. For this impromptu, write an essay in which you identify those 3 important things and explain in detail what you've learned about them. You might also want to include why your newfound knowledge is personally significant to you. Perhaps you've finally mastered the equation for acceleration, or maybe you're quite proud of being able to chart the progression of falling objects, or perhaps you're personally satisfied that you're able to incorporate source material into an essay without committing plagiarism. No matter what you choose to focus on, be sure to present your ideas in a 5-paragraph essay with a clear introductory paragraph with a thesis statement, 3 body paragraphs focused on one topic at a time, and a thoughtful concluding paragraph that sums up the ideas you presented. Write your essay for us, your instructors, and for other SFCC faculty, to help us appreciate the knowledge that you have gained so far from your studies at SFCC.

Option 2: A hot topic among college teachers and administrators these days is "The First-Year Experience" of our college students. Not surprisingly, the experience a student has in his or her first year of college often determines whether that student will stay and succeed at college, or whether he or she will leave and never come back. The pieces of this puzzle range greatly and include such experiences as the application process, testing and placement, advising, financial aid, and, of course, the ease of registration, availability of classes, effective teaching, available technologies, the library, extra curricular events, and even the physical beauty of the campus. Please write an essay to SFCC's Committee on the First Year Experience, and tell them about *your* first-year experience at SFCC. Ultimately, your thesis will declare whether your first-year experience has been (or was) positive or negative. Then, choose at least 3 topics (such as those listed) drawn from your own experience, and illustrate them with specific details or examples, to provide evidence in support of your thesis. Be sure to present your ideas in an essay of at least 5 paragraphs, with a clear introduction with thesis, focused body paragraphs, and a thoughtful concluding paragraph that sums up the ideas you presented.

Circle the option you chose, above, and staple this page to your finished (or nearly finished) draft. Also hand in the disk on which you saved your essay.

From Home to Homework

It was my first day at school. But unlike most on their first day of school, I was not an excited 6-year-old but a nervous young lady of 16. I had been home schooled from first through tenth grade, and I decided to participate in Running Start because I was ready for higher level courses. Having never been in a classroom atmosphere before, I was unsure of what to expect. Thankfully, I was pleasantly surprised. The opportunities of Running Start, extracurricular activities, and excellent teachers have all helped make my first year at college a positive experience.

The opportunities offered through Running Start have helped make my first-year experience an enjoyable one. I am able to simultaneously fulfill high school and college credits, enabling me to graduate from college earlier. By attending a community college, I will obtain an AST degree at the same time I receive my high school diploma. Another benefit is that my college tuition is paid for, allowing me to save money for when I transfer to a four-year university. Being home schooled, I had already fulfilled most of my high school requirements, so I was able to start right into the Engineering program. As a result, I will be able to transfer to UW as a Junior when I am only 18.

My first year at college was also exciting because extracurricular activities and study groups encouraged me to branch out. The clubs I am currently involved in are the Engineering Club and the Christian Club. I also recently became a member of the Phi Theta Kappa honor society. I have enjoyed participating in activities such as Bible studies, tower building competitions, and a hydroelectric dam tour. I have met many new people who share my same interests. When I was home schooled, I was quite shy and had

very few friends. Now, through participating in club activities, I have made new friends and become a more confident person. I have also acquired valuable team skills by learning to work and study in groups.

Having some excellent teachers has also made my first year a fulfilling experience. My very first quarter, I had an incredible math teacher for Calculus I. Through his excellent graphs and detailed explanations, he made difficult concepts seem easy. My Engineering teacher has also encouraged me to do my best. Although his courses are hard, I leave each class with a sense of achievement. In Computer Science, my teacher kept class light and enjoyable with his random stories and sense of humor. My English teacher makes class fun by encouraging group participation, and, for the first time, I am actually enjoying writing essays! I have discovered that all teachers are more than willing to answer questions and help students succeed.

I am very glad that I decided to participate in Running Start at SFCC because my college experience has been wonderful. Inspiring teachers, fun activities, and strict coursework have helped me discover my true potential. It has been quite an adjustment from being home schooled, but I have learned and experienced many new things that have made me a more well-rounded person. Although I work very hard and study a lot, my rewards are good grades and a feeling of achievement. Having never attended a public high school, I cannot say that college is better, but I will say that my expectations of college were not only met, but exceeded.

Faculty Comments on Portfolio #2

This collection of essays, while quite good, wasn't seen by the group as being as strong as the first portfolio. However, this writer clearly also has mastered certain writing skills, and these are shown in these papers. All essays are clearly written and very readable.

Midterm Essay: In this essay, as in all of the essays in this portfolio, the writer shows focus and development. Quotes and paraphrasing are well integrated. She is also able to differentiate between summary and opinion, conforming to what the topic dictates, but also showing her ability to handle a college-level task. She shows a balanced approach to the topic. It was felt that she could use a bit more depth on this first essay, as some of her analogies are shallow or not even apt.

Documented Persuasive Essay: Again, focus and development were noted and applauded. Her facts are followed by analysis. Portfolio readers felt that they were able to learn something from reading this essay. The writer uses sophisticated sentences, with varied vocabulary, length, and punctuation. The image the writer uses in her opening sentence, "Do you remember the beautiful, red, poisoned apple in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*?" was mentioned as grabbing the readers' attention and immediately engaging them in the paper. The topic felt fresh and interesting.

Impromptu Essay: This paper is nicely organized, with focused paragraphs. Though not the writer's fault, she may have been limited by the assignment, which is a bit rigid in its structure. In fact, one reader felt that she didn't write on the topic at all, and that what she wrote in this essay isn't very convincing. However, this was a minority opinion. Most readers agree that the writing fulfills the strictures of the assignment.

In all of these essays, focus and development are key elements. It was felt that this portfolio was a pleasure to read, and one reader stated that she could "glide right through this."

Portfolio #3: Borderline

Please type or print.

What was the writing assignment? (Use your teacher's words or attach the assignment.)

Write a Descriptive-Narrative Essay, of 600-850 words, in which you show how and why a person, place, or experience made a significant impression on you or from which you learned something of importance. Use MLA style.

Please describe what you consider most successful in this paper.

My most successful part of the essay would be the description of Claude Monet's painting and how it made me feel. I wanted to convey the impact it had on me, along with the extraordinary beauty of the painting. I wanted the childhood to sound nostalgic and the present time positive. So I believe this is another successful part.

Please describe your writing process. For example, what editorial help did you have, from whom, what changes did you make?

The freewriting and enthusiastic lectures from our Instructor fueled my imagination to dig deep into my true feelings. I wrote most of it in one clip and then added the conclusion after it formatted in my mind. The words flowed easily, after writing my first draft I needed to structure the essay. That is where our reviews in grammar, sentence structure and essay outline helped me to form paragraphs. Readings from the anthology essays gave me good examples.

A Picture Is Worth A Lifetime of Dreams

Seeing a wonderful painting in my twenties planted a seed in my mind. Now, much later in my life, it has started to sprout and grow. Deciding to return to school at an age when I should be thinking of retiring, doing more charity work or just sipping Margaritas in the sun, sounds a little crazy to most of my friends but that is what I am attempting to do. Some of the credit for my college endeavor belongs to a man long dead, the master painter Claude Monet.

Growing up, I hardly ever had any exposure to the arts. I guess most of it was in church, you know, angels and stained glass, that kind of art. And I may have heard the arguments about whether or not abstract art was really art, on the radio, during breakfast, eating Frosted Flakes. This interested me. The name Jackson Pollack rang a bell, but my childhood and teenage years were more about reading, writing and arithmetic. Studying art then was more like becoming an actor, not a very viable career in the real world of work.

In my Catholic grammar school, St. Ladislaus, art consisted of gathering fall leaves or gluing holy pictures into our notebooks. Sometimes we would even color stained glass pictures, which was so very exciting, as you can imagine. Most of us weren't guided to be very creative, and these classes had a lot of sleepy kids with their heads on their desks. High school wasn't much better; it was the '60s and creative teaching wasn't what it is now either. Maybe it was just the crowd I hung around with and psychedelics hadn't arrived on the scene yet.

So I strolled along in my life, sometimes running, sometimes going in circles, sometimes even traipsing. I worked hard and didn't seem to have the energy or resources to start school again. It had been a good life, yet I felt these pangs in the center of my being when I was moved by a piece of art work. Some type of a far away calling, if you will. My career was satisfying,

yet when I exposed myself to arts, and crafts too, I had almost uncomfortable feelings. Little voices in my head were saying: You should be trying this; you might like it. Trips to Manhattan museums and Santa Fe galleries that were filled with fabulous works made me feel sad somehow.

Throughout the years I read art books, decorated with beauty and style in mind, and read the biographies of a few artists. Then one day, I remembered the thoughts and feelings I had in my twenties when I saw an original painting in the Denver Art Museum. The artist was Claude Monet; the painting was of the Rouen Cathedral. I remembered how it sky-rocketed my love of the Impressionist painters and my lifelong interest to learn more of these people and their works.

Here I was, face to face with the original work. The colors and brush strokes were magnificent, the paint thick, and the hues were of pastel pinks, gold and oranges. They seemed to twinkle and move, and so did I in response. Up close the painting was almost a blur of beautiful colors, a sea of pastels with the foggy feeling of a church on the canvas. Somehow, it wanted to pull me in like a lover might have, to swallow the viewer into a whirlpool of dizzying lights.

As I moved farther away, the painting came into a beautiful focus. The simple subject matter, church and sky, took on a regal quality; the cathedral was more pronounced and understandable to the eye, one viewpoint so dramatically different from the other. A small clear blue section of sky stood out in contrast to the main structure of the cathedral facade. It seemed to evidence nature in contrast to man by bringing the eye up, to the cool heavens, while the ground colors burned as if on fire. So much grandeur in this small painting, more than I ever expected, showed me why we call some painters Masters. Savoring these sights, I put them in a special place in my heart, the seed planted, until now.

Again, life flowed on, taking me through more twists and turns than I would have liked after a lifetime of working. Some things weren't going very well. I felt sad and sorry for myself. Something had to change. I found little delights to lift my spirits, good books, films, photos and paintings. One day, sitting in the Indian Trail Library, I realized that just simple colors made me feel better. Strong bright colors, misty dreamy colors, all of them just made me feel good, changed my moods. That's when my seed burst open, and thank the fates, my opportunity to start doing what I love so much was fertilized by life.

It's funny how things can just click. The right people, places and things were there for me. I was able to enroll at SFCC and start classes. The tasks here really seem like play to me now, sometimes a bit of a chore, but mostly fun. A fun and challenging time in my life, as I head into my 60s. That is most likely when I will get my first degree. Or I just might keep going and going. Thanks to Claude and my friend Sue, who took me to the art exhibit in the 1970s, I may be having all this fun right into the year 2020.

Please type or print.

What was the writing assignment? (Use your teacher's words or attach the assignment.)

Write a documented argumentative essay (1,200 – 1,500 words) on a controversial issue in which you try to convince the undecided reader of the merits of your position. This is not merely an informative essay; you are required to take a stand on the issue. If you are not sure where you stand, then arbitrarily pick a side, and argue it to the best of your ability (in much the same way as a lawyer must “argue for the client,” whether the lawyer believes said client is guilty or not).

Your goal is to argue your position intelligibly and logically, avoiding simplistic reasoning and overgeneralization.

Use MLA style and documentation, including a Works Cited page. Use a minimum of three (3) different sources, one of which must be a non-internet source.

Please describe what you consider most successful in this paper.

I argued my issue strongly with clear facts and emphasis on these facts effecting our world. The paragraphs lead well into one another and I built my case clearly as they went on. Finally, I had a strong conclusion that summarized the entire paper and a diverse number of sources that I referred to in my Works Cited page.

Please describe your writing process. For example, what editorial help did you have, from whom, what changes did you make?

My research was extensive and I took a good deal of time reviewing the information and formulating a good argument. Rather than making many changes, I wrote the paper initially and added information for more detail and emphasis. Much of my editorial help came from consulting Concise Wadsworth Handbook many times. My instructor helped with punctuation along with great support and effective teaching of how to write a documented argumentative essay. I was challenged and enjoyed the process.

Let the Wolf Keep Balance in Nature

Wolf populations need time to grow before removing them from the protection they now receive under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). This species deserves the chance to repopulate and again become a vital part of our ecosystem. Wolves have been a missing piece in the natural balance of wildlife here in the contiguous United States since early in the twentieth century; therefore, allow them to flourish in their habitat before removing them from the ESA. Then, all things considered, use sound conservation methods that serve both wolf and man. The future of these creatures is our responsibility and our legacy.

Canis Lupus migrated to the North American continent across the Bering Strait during the Ice Age, about 40 million years ago. For the last 20,000 years, the wolf we now know has hunted and survived in the harsh climate, keeping the balance of wildlife in order. This hunter preyed on the weak and sickly animals in order to allow healthy wildlife to thrive on the continent. Native Americans revere the wolf for its courage, cunning and family values; they resonate with these indigenous people. But, the new settlers of this land did not treat them fairly. Wolves have a complex social structure close to our own; they are a family animal. Both parents, along with the other members of the pack, care for the pups when they are born in the spring. They teach and carefully guide their young. The entire pack is one coherent unit and the leaders are the Alpha Pair. This alpha male and female keep the other members in order by teaching the younger pack members where, when, and what to hunt. Many times, wolves that kill livestock have lost the alpha pair and are inexperienced hunters. The alphas teach the pack to hunt wildlife not grazing herds. The wolf does know how to be mannerly to the world around it. They fit into their environment perfectly and were a healthy part of this country when the white European

migrations to America began. Full measures to completely eliminate the wolf started in about 1800, the government stepped in to help, and the wolf was nearly extinct by the 1960s (Lopez 63). Why is the white man so willing to kill them all and when will the wolf finally be baptized from its perceived Original Sin?

Fear of the wolf can be traced back to the Dark Ages. Then, as well as now, fear was used to control people. “Wolves are portrayed as evil, vicious, ravenous beasts with an insatiable appetite for human flesh” (Jen). Entire populations were swayed to hate this animal, and for what purpose? Werewolf and wolfman myths were used by the religious sectors to control their people. Witch hunts served the same purpose, but that is another story. It was said that “Wolves can at the right cycle of the moon possess a human soul” (2). A man or woman could be accused of changing into a werewolf and having an alliance with evil forces. This unlucky person, who usually did not agree with the doctrines of the church, would be tried, convicted, tortured and put to death. This was a sad time in a sector of an otherwise wholesome ideology and also a great detriment to the image of the wolf. This image of fear and evil has lasted in the minds of men. Killing wolves is still illegally happening “even though there is not one documented case of a healthy wild wolf killing a human being”(3). Given this brutal manipulation, the wolf’s reputation has suffered, and as a result, literally millions have been killed.

The US was growing in the early 1800s and so were American businesses. Wolves interfered with livestock industries and the new settlers’ land use; demonizing them was good propaganda. Wolf propaganda was wide spread and helped create jobs for bounty hunters and blood lust in hunters. As many wolves as possible were hunted, poisoned, and trapped; others died because of losing their habitat to the pioneer settlers. The last remaining wolf packs were mortalized by swift aerial hunting. Again, in our history, as with buffalo, beaver and others, this

was the sorrowful conclusion. I have every respect for the rancher and his products. I am a meat eater. But the need to kill every wolf to protect livestock is beyond reprehension. Many animals kill livestock besides wolves; cougars, coyotes, bears and foxes have all been guilty. Yet, the wolf was hated, and systematically and inhumanely killed nearly to extinction. "Here there might have been room for both human and animal predators to live their separate lives in peace; instead, North America became the scene of the human race's most successful killing campaign against the wolf ("Wolf"). Thus, the ancestors of our loyal dogs were nearly gone.

Now, something of a miracle is in our midst, yet it has caused much controversy. Ed Bangs of the US Fish and Wildlife Services says, "Just put the word wolf in anything related to wildlife and it causes controversy." This shows how little we have learned about the creatures we victimized. Still, they have been successfully reintroduced into parts of the US. The first wolves were released in Yellowstone in 1995. The wolf population is growing and becoming stronger and the wolves are restoring balance to an ecosystem that has suffered from their absence. Already in Yellowstone, the coyote population has been thinned, allowing more small animal prey for foxes, hawks, eagles and snakes. The same scenario helps the deer and elk fight disease and have a stronger herd. The wolf has come home, and they too are now flourishing (McNamee).

Subsequently, the wolf may soon be taken off, or delisted, from the ESA. Of course, laws will be enacted to conserve the animal, but despite our knowledge there are still some who would rid the world of these noble creatures. Their motivation is to protect the commodities they work so hard raising, and rightly so, they should protect their products. Not by taking matters into their own hands and randomly killing wolves, but by communication with the professionals who work with this issue. Wolves will kill ranch animals when they are hungry, and the US Fish and

Wildlife Services reimburse for the kills and relocate troublesome animals. The field specialists radio collar and track wolves, they keep strict control of them. Ranchers and wolves can live in peace when communication between them is active. Nonetheless, illegal killing of wolves still occurs.

Another possible injury to the prolific recovery of the wolf will be when delisting occurs and hunting would begin. This could be dangerous to their well being; "...there are concerns about how hunters may disrupt socialization patterns of the wolf packs, important to the animals' continued survival" (qtd in Morlin). We cannot keep repeating our past actions. Hunters and ranchers alike must manage their livelihoods with new technologies and information. A good example is when ranchers and biologists in Idaho worked together to control sheep depredations in the eastern Boulder Mountains. Some measures included arming sheep herders with radio equipment to monitor wolf movements. When wolves are near herds, additional guard dogs are brought in for more protection. Cracker shells, which resonate loudly, can scare off wolves, as well as shotguns loaded with non-lethal rubber bullets. One method is to wait and sting the wolf with the rubber bullet when it sees the sheep; this, along with the other methods, conditions the wolves to react adversely to the sheep and hunt elsewhere. Electric night fences and other techniques are on trial now also (Kauffman). We can learn. Fear makes people do stupid things, but ignorance can be educated. There are better means of controlling predation than annihilation; professionals know how to conserve and control animals humanely. All things considered, let us not eradicate these canine mammals again. We need the willingness to see both sides.

In other words, be informed of the facts, incorporate new techniques for animal control and respect the laws. We need collaboration on these issues not controversy, and should "be willing to listen to opposing views and be willing to compromise and adjust viewpoints for the

techniques to succeed” (qtd in Morlin). With all this in mind, we can learn much about conservation and learn about ourselves at the same time. In conclusion, respect both sides of the controversy of wolf management. The wolf deserves the right to live and hunt, while we all deserve consideration and respect. Let’s show the moral excellence that our humanity does contain. We can oversee our world with a safe environment for its creatures. Indeed, this will benefit the human experience and, as a result, the wolf will take its rightful place again.

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Choose one of the following topics to develop into an effective essay of at least 500 words of hand-written text. Read the topic carefully to make sure that you respond to it directly and fully. Establish a clear thesis that controls the entire essay. Provide plenty of evidence (concrete details, examples, personal observations, etc.) to support and develop your thesis.

Write in pen, not in pencil. Staple this page to the front of the essay and **circle the topic number that you chose**. Some corrections or stray marks are expected, but overall your paper should be easily read. Good luck!

1. Our possessions can possess us—and they frequently do, sometimes delightfully, sometime harmfully. Nearly everyone has felt that the essence of life was summed up for the moment by having a dog, a record collection, a pair of skis or earrings or special jeans. In an essay, define your past or present obsession with a special personal belonging that affects your life. (Another way to look at this: If your house were on fire and you could only save one object, what would you choose and why?)
2. Adolescents and their parents customarily go through a period of sustained bickering, which may last a few years, over simple issues such as household cleanliness, going out, studying, spending money, and so on. In your family, what were/are the recurrent themes or persistent issues during this period of mutual irritation? Were the differences ever resolved? Clarify both sides of the key issue in your own passage through the valley of family harassment.
3. What particular place has made you aware of your entire country? It might be a historical site, a busy city street, a wilderness area, a schoolyard, a game, a mall, or any place that at a specific moment epitomized America for you (or whatever your country may be)—for better or worse. Describe the place, giving the concrete details that affected you with their national symbolism.
4. Write a set of “Four Guidelines for Coping with the United States.” Explain four things that a newcomer has to know and understand in order to recognize American realities. Address yourself to young adults who are as well educated as you. Discuss what may be unfamiliar to an outsider. Your guidelines may explain positive or negative features of society. (*If you come from a different country or culture, you can adapt this topic to deal with your own country or culture instead of America.)

Colorado Bound

Leaving my home in Central Jersey as a young woman, for a trip to Colorado was an exciting time for me. I had no way of knowing what lie ahead and I didn't care. I was nineteen years old and just wanted to go! Arriving in Colorado, I was in awe of the great expanse of this country. The "Star Spangled Banner" played in my head. This huge open country is real, not just pictures in a text book. My excitement had me running up mountains and deciding I had to learn more about our countries' History.

Growing up in Central Jersey was isolating in many ways. There was no need to go far for stimulation. Manhattan and most things needed were no more than a thirty-minute drive. Life was contained in a tri-state area. But one summer, my girlfriend and I headed to Colorado for camping and adventure. This is the summer I truly fell in love with this land we call the United States of America.

"Oh say can you see by the dawns early light..." and that is how it happened. Driving on I-70, I said to my friend "Look at those unusual clouds on the horizon." They weren't clouds they were the snow capped Rocky Mountains. Every geography and history class I've had flashed before my eyes. This is a big country. What do I know about all this? I asked myself. The wide open spaces of our country are real and I want to know about them, and how they became part of the US.

I was reminded of patriotic songs and "The Pledge of Allegiance" that I had said again and again. I read books that told me how the settlers crossed, farming began, our military, our Natl. Parks system. And by learning, I realized what a wonderful system of government keeps this very large country moving.

I discovered the open plains where the corn and wheat fields are. Realized how hard the farmer worked and really did get up at the crack of dawn. Saw the Harvest and old farm buildings.

The site of the US Airforce Academy built into the foot of the mountains made our military more real to me. I saw the young boys in uniform, tanks, and jets in Colorado Springs, all working as a well oiled machine.

Colorado history opened my eyes to the life of the Native American also. It was not the happiest of learnings, but true. Many US treaties were signed with these people. This was also a part of our history.

Going to Rocky Mountain Park for the first time had me thanking our forefathers for the insight to put aside land that will always remain our beautiful country. I thanked Teddy Roosevelt very much. After being in the most densely populated region of our country, this was heaven. The US Parks service is a blessing.

I saw the Bald Eagle in person. Majestic, the symbol of our land. How lucky we are to live in a free land. The eagle flew from tree to tree, as we are free to come and go also.

Being in such a wonderful state helped me see the liberty and justice for all. We had a big 4th of July party that year. And for the first time, really, I felt in my heart what we were celebrating. Not just barbeque and fireworks. The Constitution, Bill of Rights, and all those before us who fought to keep this country beautiful and free.

Faculty Comments on Portfolio #3

This collection of essays garnered a great deal of discussion. While the portfolio did not ultimately fail, it was felt by the group at large that a “No Pass for One Essay” rating would be an appropriate grade. There were, however, readers who still felt the whole portfolio should fail.

Narrative Essay: It was felt that this was “breezy and readable.” One reader stated that the first couple of sentences of this paper, which had been revised since midterm, were “awful,” but the writing did improve. Some readers noted the nice style. There are good descriptions in the paper. This was seen as a passing essay.

Documented Persuasive Essay: The problems with this portfolio start with this essay and continue to the impromptu essay. While readers felt that there was some really nice description and lots of detailed information that comes from a variety of angles, there was concern about the thesis. The paper feels unbalanced; one reader said that there is too much history, and that the argument itself starts too late, meaning that history trumps argument. There is also the problem of “quotes from God,” i.e., quotes that are not introduced and feel plunked into the paper. Citations are also faulty. There are focus and organization problems, due to the fact that the thesis doesn’t control the paper. However, the writer seems enthusiastic about the topic, and the sentence structure was felt to be fine.

Impromptu Essay: This is the paper the majority of readers would have had the writer revise. The major issue is with paragraphing. The essay feels like a list, with paragraphs that aren’t unified or developed. While there are some good descriptions, this paper has a bulleted quality. It was also felt that this is more narrative than descriptive, meaning that the writer isn’t writing to the assignment.

The group believed that the writer, if given a chance to revise, could probably pass on a second reading, as there is a clear voice here. Readers had a sense that the writer is almost there. There is consideration of audience, and there is adequate sentence structure. As is, though, the writer needs to address some of the issues identified in order to meet college-level writing standards.

Portfolio #4: Problematic

Please type or print.

What was the writing assignment? (Use your teacher's words or attach the assignment.)

Essay #2 Summary/Response

Occasion: Your second essay assignment will give you the opportunity to read, discuss, and respond to one of the articles in our anthology, *50 Essays*.

Writing Task: You may select one of the following: Malcolm X, "Learning to Read"; Sherman Alexie, "The Joy of Reading and Writing"; Frederick Douglas, "Learning to Read and Write." After selecting one, write your own "Summary and Response" essay. Your essay will need an intro paragraph that leads up to a thesis statement in which you make a claim about the article. The body of the essay will contain your summary of the article and your response to it.

To accomplish the body of your essay, you'll first write a summary of the article (2 paragraphs min.) in which you impartially represent the significant ideas the author presents in the essay. Be sure to use acknowledgment phrases to make it clear to the reader that the ideas you present are not your own but are those of the author.

In the second part of the body of the essay, develop and refine your ideas to some part or parts of what the author discuss in the essay. Write at least two paragraphs. Choose a couple of topics and develop your thoughts about them in well focused and fully developed paragraphs.

Then add a concluding paragraph that sums up your essay's main ideas (include those of the summary and the response portions) and restates your thesis/claim.

Audience: Fellow classmates but also other English teachers who will not have your familiarity with the article. Therefore, you'll have to summarize effectively, which will also contextualize your response. Your classmates and your portfolio readers will be interested in the thoughts you have in response to the author's claims.

Please describe what you consider most successful in this paper.

Just having the paper done was enough for me. I have had difficulties turning papers in in the past. I've always managed to make an outline, rough draft, and revision, just never a final revision. This is probably one of the greatest "turn ins" I've ever had.

Please describe your writing process. For example, what editorial help did you have, from whom, what changes did you make?

For me I was spending more time on the outline and set up. I had spent two days figuring out what I wanted to write about. I wrote up a rough draft in a sinch, but when it came t peer review I felt like I was stifed by my peers. All they said was "it's good" not really any help. But the teacher made up for that definitely.

20-4

October 9, 2007

Let's Meet Superman

Superman saves the world, but so does Sherman Alexie. In a piece called "Superman and Me" Sherman Alexie writes about his journey of learning to read and using his knowledge to inspire others to success. The greatness of Sherman Alexie comes from his self determination and the ability to influence others to be great as well.

"Superman and Me" is a small testament to the power of reading.

Pushing himself to become something more than just another Indian, Alexie read constantly throughout his youth. "A smart Indian is a dangerous person, widely feared and ridiculed by Indians and non-Indians alike." (Sherman Alexie) This is a sentence of a paragraph that details the trials of facing his culture. He described how other Indian kids have problems with reading and interacting with non-Indian adults and children. Alexie detailed the submissiveness of other children towards non-Indians, but their ability to confront others of the same decent. "I refused to fail. I was smart. I was arrogant. I was lucky." Sherman Alexie even at a young age read books any chance he was given. He talked about reading at recess, basketball games, family powwows, and even the car rides home from school. Cereal boxes, books from the library, books from his father, books in a store, school bulletins, whatever he could get his hands on, Sherman Alexie would read. "I was trying to save my life." (Alexie) This quote taken from the second to last paragraph meant that Alexie was trying to become something more than just another Indian. He himself became educated through the love of books.

Sherman Alexie used the knowledge he gained to inspire children to read and to write. "I visit schools and teach creative writing to Indian kids." (Alexie) Alexie in the last paragraph stated that writing was "beyond Indians" that no one of importance visited schools. He also stated that he visited schools as much as possible; teaching to children the importance of writing. He stated the learning environment he and Indian children of today have to encounter. He explained how the classrooms are overfilled, how there wasn't anyone who would come and speak at these schools. The other fact was the knowledge that other Indians wrote: books, poetry, essays and other forms. "Books.' I say to them. 'Books,' I say.' He gives the idea of reading, to everyone, as a way to save their lives. He means this, to say, that people need to become something more than mundane, uneducated, everyday nobody.

He sees the world that could only come from his ability to read. Sherman Alexie sees the world in such a way that everything is simple while remaining complicated. His third paragraph in this piece was dedicated to how he sees the world and the people in it. He views people as paragraphs; people are made up of different words and sentences (traits) that become one whole idea like a paragraph (person as a whole). This allows him to view people for more than just face value. Having the ability to organize people and ideas into a system like paragraphs shows his intelligence. Alexie can break down even the most complicated systems, and group most of the simplest ideas, people, places, objects, anything. This ability is amazing. If everyone had this system or something similar there would be more understanding in the world.

It is very altruistic of Alexie to use the knowledge he has gained for a greater good. Sherman Alexie had the ability to use what he has learned for several different uses. He could have purely been a writer and never teach. The fact that he goes to schools and speaks to children about writing and influences them to read more is truly an act of greatness. He shares his knowledge. He dedicates his writing of novels and papers to further educate others. Alexie also further educates himself by constantly reading so that he may be better at teaching others. His actions and words have inspired hundreds of children and he will continue to do so.

As long as Sherman Alexie reads he will further better himself and others. Through his self determination and perseverance he has made his life what it is today. He visits schools to inspire children to greatness. He sees the world in a way to better himself. Alexie is an altruistic person to continue to further inspire and educate others. Sherman Alexie is a modern day Superman.

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Please type or print.

What was the writing assignment? (Use your teacher's words or attach the assignment.)

Occasion: Speaking in Essay 4 as a concerned citizen rather than a member of a team of scholars briefing an official task force, as you were in Essay 3, you decide to **persuade the task force to agree with your opinion** on your important public issue. As an engaged citizen, you believe it is your duty to make your voice heard and so help shape the world you live in.

Writing Task: For Essay 4, you'll take a stand on the issue with opposing views you chose for Essay 3, and argue convincingly for your stance. Find at least one additional credible source (you will also want to reuse those sources you found for Essay 3), then write an essay that convinces the task force to consider your position.

Format: The essay must be typed, double-spaced, **3-5 pages**, in a readable 12-point font, with 1" margins. Document your sources using MLA Style. **At least 4 secondary sources must be used.** Three of these may be the sources you chose for Essay 3, but one must be an additional source. You may use up to two internet sources.

Please describe what you consider most successful in this paper.

Getting the information. The amount of information that I was able to find (and it was hard to find) was awesome. Things I never knew about India and their situation. I had to really search, which was surprising. I thought there would be more info on the topic, but there is really quite little. It's well known, but really hasn't been discussed.

Please describe your writing process. For example, what editorial help did you have, from whom, what changes did you make?

For me this paper was about the facts – how much I can back myself up. It seemed that I have friends that disagree with the entirety of this essay. It's strange how you find the feelings of others through these essays. Peer review actually helped. One of my peers was born in India and that's what started my in depth research on the country.

Composition 101

Monday December 10, 2007

Project Population

6,600,000,000 is the rough estimate of the population of the world today (“U.S. Population”). With the population so high, new problems have risen and others will rise. The world’s population is growing ever higher, and we must understand that it will cause problems on many different fronts, from food supply, the environment, and even the economy.

Many people get confused when they think of overpopulation. Most would think of overpopulation as meaning that there are too many people in the world, but Paul Ehrlich and Anne Ehrlich explain that the problem is more complex: “The key to understanding overpopulation is not population density but the number of people in an area is relative to its resources and the capacity of the environment to sustain human activities; that is, to the area's carrying capacity.” (Ehrlich and Ehrlich). What they mean by this is that the world is overpopulated because there are too few resources for the number of people.

India is a perfect example of the relationship of overpopulation to the available amount of resources. As of July 1st India’s population has reached an estimated 1,129,900,000, or 1,129.9 million people per 2,973,190 square kilometers. To put this into perspective, India is slightly larger than one third the size of the United States, but it has almost 4 times as many people (“India”). With its steadily rising debt, limited resources, and inflation on a steep rise, India’s population concerns have reached an all

time high. India, as well as many other countries, are raising concerns about population growth and its effects. Sixty percent of the jobs held in India are agriculture based. Yet astonishingly, India is a very poor and hungry nation. They do not produce enough food for their own nation.

Besides the overwhelming need to produce enough food for a larger population, overpopulation also impacts the environment. There are places already in the world that have felt the environmental sting of overpopulation. For example, in Mexico City where overpopulation is a large problem, "...the air people breathe in one day is equal to smoking two packs of cigarettes." ("Overpopulation"). Overpopulation also affects the quality of life. Though Mexico City is closed off by mountain ranges and is an enclosed ecosystem (where the air and water are not easily cycled from the outside) Mexico City is a perfect example of what the world may become if these issues are not met ("Overpopulation"). Carbon dioxide emissions are responsible for this dirty air. According to the Energy Information Administration, in 1980 there were 18,330 million metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions in the world. 25 years later in 2005 the number had increased to 28,193 million metric tons ("International"). With the world's population near 4.5 billion in 1980 and at 6.6 billion today, emissions will only get higher as the number of people continues to rise ("U.S. and World"). Not only will emissions get higher, the need for lumber will also increase, and this will be detrimental to forests, which produce most of the world's oxygen. "Nearly half of the world's original forest cover has been lost, and each year another 16 million hectares are cut..." (Hinrichsen, Robey). With diminishing natural landscapes the world's quality air supply will be too

toxic for people to stand. Hinrichsen and Robey point out that about 3 million people in the world die each year, because of air pollution (Hinrichsen, Robey).

While the environment of the planet worsens, the economy of each country is steadily weakening, making it difficult for countries to financially sustain their citizens. The unemployment percentage of the U.S. in the last ten years has ranged anywhere from 3.9% to 6.3%. The percentage is now at 4.7% and rising (Dept of Labor). The more people the fewer jobs, the fewer jobs, and the more homeless there are in the world. In a report done by MSNBC, in 2005 there were 754,000 people in the U.S. that were homeless (“Report”). That means that roughly 2.5% of the people living in the U.S. are homeless. The affordability and accessibility of homes in the U.S. will constantly be difficult for the rising population of the nation. With limited jobs and the difficulty in buying or even renting a home, America’s quality of life may become similar to a modern day India. Countries like India with 7.8% unemployment rate, less land area, and higher population have this issue destroying their economy (“India”). With a rise in population, the need for less expensive housing is a must. With high population, property values are most likely to increase. This effect causes inflation. Inflation is the general level of prices related to an increase in the volume of money and resulting in the loss of value of currency (“Inflation”). For a country with so many people having a stable economy is crucial. With a high inflation rate, a country’s debt will grow, making a stable economy impossible. Overpopulation makes feeding all of a country’s citizens, making decent living standards, and available jobs difficult to obtain.

People must take action. Some governments in the world have put limits on the number of children families can have, such as India and China. Debates for solutions are

constantly conducted by the United Nations, the European Union, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and many other world organizations. Every 13 years, the population of the world grows by about one billion (Hinrichsen, Robey). Contraceptives and planned family development are only recently becoming popular. Whatever the case may be, there needs to be a solution, or these and many unforeseen issues will occur. For some countries this is already a reality. Resources are limited and overpopulation will make it harder to achieve an acceptable standard of living. Carbon emissions are destroying the earth, and the levels of emissions are increasing. Major forests are constantly being cut down to supply the ever growing demand. Countries economies will drown in the number of people they are unable to support. The world's population is growing ever higher, and problems have already started.

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Impromptu Topics

You will have 50 minutes in class to pre-write and draft an essay that might be put in your final portfolio. Its length should be about 600-900 words (about 3-5 pages handwritten, skipping lines), and you should display what you know about good writing: developing a specific thesis sentence with specific examples in a logical order using transitions and committing few mechanical errors. At the end of the quarter, I will hand back both impromptu drafts, you will choose the one impromptu you feel is strongest, and you will have 50 minutes to revise and edit your draft, to be used in your final portfolio. Here are your topics for this impromptu:

1. College Expectations: So far has college been a disappointment to you? A pleasant surprise? Or just about what you expected? Whether you came to college straight out of high school or opted to continue your formal education after a twenty year hiatus, it's likely that you had some beforehand image of what college going would be like, some set of expectations about the demands, pleasures, and general nature of college life. Now, of course, you've had some time to measure those earlier expectations against the reality of the college experience. In this essay, it's your job to compare your pre-college assumptions about higher education with your actual experience as a college student. Is course work easier or more difficult than you expected it to be? Are instructors pretty much the folks you imagined they'd be, or are they different creatures entirely? How about your fellow students—are they more or less what you expected they'd be like, or are they significantly different than you figured they'd be? Make a claim about the level of accuracy of your pre-college assumptions and support that claim using lots of specific examples.

2. Self-Creation: Defining One's Self in a World of Info-Overload... is our college-wide theme this year, and here at SFCC we'd like to know which is most responsible for creating who we are: is it we ourselves, or is it the outside influences that surround us? Which is it? Use specific examples, from your own experience and the experience of those you know (as well as research if you'd like), to prove your thesis.

3. Super Power: You have been granted one super physical power (flight, invisibility, strength, etc.) for one day. Pick one super power and explain what you would do with it. Be sure your answer addresses not only what you would do but *why*, that is, how your super power would benefit you or others. As the chances of this scenario happening are fairly slim, in your conclusion you could address reality. While you cannot actually have super powers, what can you do in your life to at least approach the ideal you describe in your essay?

4. Summer 07: Which was the best summer film of 2007? One of the big sequels like Harry Potter, Pirates, Rush Hour, Die Hard, Oceans, or Bourne? Or more independent fare like Once, Interview, or Fido, or documentaries like Air Guitar Nation or Sicko? Or maybe a foreign film like Journey from the Fall, Paprika, or Falling? Make sure you define what "best" is and support your film claim with reasons (in your topic sentences) and lots of specific examples.

A Complaint about College

College is an experience worth taking the time, effort, and expenses for. Though college might be of great worth to a simpleton, college has been a tremendous disappointment to me. The difficulty of college is at a very low standard.

Every high school student is warned and prepared for the difficulties of college. Their teachers warnings of weekly ten page papers and homework stacked to their eyeballs struck fear into the hearts of every pre-college student. There was great anticipation about the homework load and about the proportions of time that would be spent. "Every single hour of class is two of homework," was a line repeated by every counsler and instructor both from college and high school. Come to find that two weeks worth of math class takes me less than an hour to accomplish. The proportion stands at eight hours of class to one hour of homework. Senior year of high school I had constant three to five page papers due every week. Four out of six classes in college I would be lucky to get just one paper, in one class, every two weeks. "Well, that means your grades must be slipping," a comment made by many college counslers after I personally complained about the lack of challenge. A counsler will help someone who things course work is too difficult, and refuse to help those who think course work too easy.

While a higher standard is not applicable to everyone it forces the more capable to a lower level of education. Running start, older people, and those that have prior commitments to children and work lower that lever of education. Running start students should not be allowed unless they match the maturity of college. I can't count the numerous times some immature running start student interrupted

the class by talking, passing notes, or refusal to pay attention. Their interruptions take away class time that the rest of us pay for. I respect a person well into their much older age that wants to learn, but it's their choice. They should accept the difficult that should come with higher education. Those who miss class because of their children or work should not be given a chance to make up work or get extensions on papers. It was their choice to have prior commitments.

As for basic requirements that involve English or math's "refresher" courses, those should not be required. Placement test don't match the level of classes. The test for placement get much higher than that of class. Solution, raise the standards of education. The true difficulty in college doesn't come from material and course work, it comes from the distraction you get from having college be too easy. The fact that anyone can do college should not be an accomplishment for the institution but a failure to those whose potential is slowed.

The difficulty of college is at a very low standard. The worth of education is invaluable, but only if the quality can reflect upon it. Good things come easy, great things come with difficulty.

Faculty Comments on Portfolio #4

This collection of essays did not pass portfolio reading, despite the fact that many of the readers felt that the essays were revisable. The department rules state that if two or more essays don't meet minimum standards, the entire portfolio receives a "No Pass" rating, and the student will be encouraged to take English 101 again to gain additional practice and instruction in academic writing. The writer's narrative paper did pass at the midterm portfolio reading, at which the group felt that the writer has a strong voice and handles material deftly. However, after seeing the more representative sample that a complete portfolio provides, the problems are seen to exist in more than one paper, necessitating the "No Pass" rating.

Narrative Essay: There is a good opening line in the first essay. However, the writer doesn't meet assignment requirements. There is a lack of a controlling idea (thesis) and topic sentences. The writer doesn't distinguish between original ideas and those borrowed from another author. Basic directions aren't followed. This indicates a lack of audience awareness. This paper needs additional development.

Documented Persuasive Essay: There are good citations in this essay, though portfolio readers were put off by comments on the cover sheet that there was difficulty "getting the information." The writer states, "I thought there would be more info on the topic, but there is really quite little." Most readers know that the topic of overpopulation has received quite a bit of attention in recent decades. A lack of focus was noted, as well as the sense that this essay is too broad. Missing also is the analysis of factual information and of the argument itself. The facts used as examples indicate faulty logic. One reader noted that much of this seems unintentionally plagiarized.

Impromptu Essay: There is a lack of focus and development. While there are good examples given, there are sentence-level problems. The thesis is unclear. And audience awareness is absent.

This portfolio is interesting because at first glance it looks fine, but on further examination, problems appear. These problems are profound enough, and consistent enough, to earn a "No Pass" rating.

English 101 Assessment
Faculty Rating Sheet

Instr's prefix + full SID ____ - _____

Reader's Initials _____

MIDTERM ESSAY

Passing _____

Low Passing _____

Not Passing _____

Reason(s)

- ____ unclear focus / main point / thesis
- ____ insufficient development of ideas or experiences
- ____ organization / structure / paragraphing problems
- ____ wording and sentence structure problems
- ____ punctuation: too many mistakes
- ____ spelling, proofreading: too many mistakes
- ____ treatment of topic inappropriate for college audience
- ____ inadequate response to the assignment
- ____ other: _____
- _____

Additional Comment

English 101 Assessment
Faculty Rating Sheet

Instr's prefix + full SID ____ - _____

Reader's Initials _____

FINAL PORTFOLIO

Passing _____

Not Passing _____

Not Passing (one essay) _____

Reason(s)

- ____ unclear focus / main point / thesis
- ____ insufficient development of ideas or experiences
- ____ organization / structure / paragraphing problems
- ____ wording and sentence structure problems
- ____ punctuation: too many mistakes
- ____ spelling, proofreading: too many mistakes
- ____ treatment of topic inappropriate for college audience
- ____ inadequate response to the assignment
- ____ other: _____
- _____

Additional Comment

Garrison Description of Writing Quality

Pass (C or higher) for mid-term and final

- thesis is clear and controls paper yet lacks specificity, unification; the essay's digressions do not profoundly distract the reader
- evidence and analysis is adequate but thin, and some development is overly general or repetitive
- organization is occasionally not clear, compelling the reader to stop and re-read previous material to be sure of meaning
- while some sentence variety is attempted, diction is sometimes wordy or clichéd
- grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors do not profoundly interfere with meaning

Low pass at midterm/No pass at final (C-)

- while a thesis may be present, it does not control the paper; it might be awkwardly worded or vague; the focus may digress in a manner distracting to the reader
- supporting information is inadequate; development lacks concrete detail or the detail is too general, inappropriate, or repetitive
- organization is often unclear or meandering; the flow of ideas within the paragraphs and transitions between the paragraphs lack coherence, compelling the reader to stop and re-read to be sure of meaning.
- diction is characterized by wordiness or clichés
- grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors interfere with meaning at times

Not passing (D or lower) for mid-term and final

- lack of focus--due to the writer's haste, carelessness, lack of attention, or lack of ability--severely distracts the reader, and the controlling idea is absent
- inadequate development is characterized by details that are scanty, general, inappropriate, repetitive, and vague
- lack of organization compels the reader to struggle to find the sense, and the sense may never be found; the writer has infrequent control of the material.
- diction is characterized by wordiness, clichés, and grammar tangles that distract and interfere with meaning
- grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors severely interfere with meaning and add to a sloppy visual presentation