*The Glass Castle -* Informal Essay Assignment

*Learning goal: I can create and defend an argument so that I can engage my reader and persuade them.*

We’ve finished the novel and there are plenty of ideas presented in it that you could explore further. Using the novel as your starting point, but branching off from there, explore one of the following topics in an informal essay:

1. **Do people grow up to be just like their parents?** (focus on yourself and how your parents have influenced you, the topic in general, and/or how this topic applies to the Walls family)
2. **What makes someone successful?** (Hardships they overcome, opportunity, influence of other people, all of the above…)
3. **The cycle of poverty.** (Can it be broken? How does one break it? Does it define you forever?)
4. **Values vs. responsibility.** (What is more important? How do you encourage both? Should responsibility be sacrificed to teach values?)

**Success Criteria:**

* Clear, strong **thesis**
	+ What do you want to reader to learn from your essay?
* Supported with **specific examples/facts/quotations**
	+ From your life, the media, the novel
	+ No outside sources or research required
* Effectively use **3 different rhetorical/literary devices** abundantly throughout the essay
* Intentional **tone**
	+ Can change throughout the essay, but should begin and end similarly
* Clear **intro, body, conclusion**
	+ Intro - Catch your reader’s interest. “Hook” them.
	+ Body – Prove your point. Include literary devices!
	+ Conclusion - Make your essay something to think about

Other Criteria:

* 3-3.5 pages maximum
* Typed, double spaced, 12pt font
* Proper spelling, grammar, paragraph structure
* Follow MLA structure for formatting your essay

**Getting Started:**

1. Choose and topic and decide on an angle
2. Develop a thesis statement from it 🡪 make an argument out of the topic that someone could argue against
* Have your thesis/main idea approved **before** going any further
1. Plan the layout of your essay – **complete the outline**
* Make a list of supporting details and specific examples/facts/quotations to back them up
* Organize your list into paragraphs
1. Consider your writing style
* Decide on your tone
* Decide which rhetorical devices you want to include and how you will use them
1. Write your rough copy
2. EDIT!!!
* Have someone else edit it too
* Make sure they can clearly answer the following questions:
	+ What is your thesis/main idea?
	+ How have you supported it throughout?
	+ What is your tone?
	+ (what devices have you included)

🡪 If someone else can’t figure these out, you need to make them more obvious

1. Type your good copy
* EDIT IT AGAIN for spelling, grammar, and paragraph structure
* Make sure it follows the specifications above

Informal Essay Rubric:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Level 1 | Level 2 | Level 3 | Level 4 |
| Knowledge/ Understanding | Demonstrates limited understanding of informal essay structure | Demonstrates some understanding of informal essay structure | Demonstrates considerable understanding of informal essay structure | Demonstrates thorough understanding of informal essay structure |
| Thinking/ Inquiry | Thesis is unclear or confusingThesis is supported by points with limited effectivenessUses limited examples to support pointsI have used the writing process with limited effectiveness  | Thesis is somewhat clearThesis is somewhat supported by pointsUses some examples to support pointsI have used the writing process somewhat effectively to improve my writing | Clear thesisThesis is supported by pointsUses a variety of examples to support pointsI have used the writing process with considerable effectiveness to improve my writing | Clear and thought-provoking thesisThesis is supported effectively by pointsUses a variety of well-chosen examples to support pointsI have used the writing process effectively to improve my writing |
| Communication | Uses tone to communicate thesis with limited effectivenessCommunicates ideas in writing with limited clarity Many spelling, grammatical, structural errors | Attempts to use tone to communicate thesisCommunicates ideas in writing with some clarity Some spelling, grammatical, structural errors | Uses a clear tone to communicate thesisClearly communicates ideas in writingFew spelling, grammatical, structural errors | Uses an effective tone to communicate thesisClearly and effectively communicates ideas in writingVery few spelling, grammatical, structural errors |
| Application | Applies understanding of rhetorical devices to essay with limited effectivenessApplies understanding of MLA structure with significant errors | Applies understanding of rhetorical devices to essay with some effectivenessApplies understanding of MLA structure with some errors | Applies understanding of rhetorical devices to essay with considerable effectivenessApplies understanding of MLA structure with few minor errors | Applies understanding of rhetorical devices effectively to essayApplies understanding of MLA structure with no errors |

Informal Essay outline

Introduction

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| --- |
| Hook:Thesis/main idea (write it here, but it does not need to appear here in your essay): |

Body (could include more paragraphs)

|  |
| --- |
| Par. 1Main idea/topic:Examples and proof: |
| Par. 2Main idea/topic:Examples and proof: |
| Par. 3Main idea/topic:Examples and proof: |
| Par. 4Main idea/topic:Examples and proof: |

Conclusion

|  |
| --- |
| Link back to beginning: Thought-provoking remarks: |