

LCHS - Writing Standard

Overview:

Lynden Christian hopes to train you to effectively communicate your ideas. In writing, we hope you can gain any of the seven following modes of understanding:

- Information
- Explanation
- Interpretation
- Empathy
- Perspective
- Application
- Self-knowledge

The best assignments will promote more than one. The key to effective writing, then, comes from answering a direct question, or asking the right question; reading inductively (looking at the text), thinking deductively (coming to your own conclusions), and interpreting your answer become the seeds for life-long learning. The basic skills (essay format) can be taught so, as you explore the specific questions (either given or your own), you will have the tools to communicate effectively and persuasively, a life-skill that will last forever.

Rhetorical Strategies:

We break writing down into its elemental parts. We define good writing according to the Rhetorical Triangle: how the author's (agent's) text (message) interacts with the audience (receiver). First, we emphasize sentence structures; writing good helps readers understand, and that happens in clearly written sentences. Secondly, we emphasize paragraph structure: putting our sentences together in a pattern than develops an argument. To do this, we teach THE RHETORICAL MODES:

- *Analogy*
- *Anecdote*
- *Argument*
- *Cause and Effect*
- *Classification*
- *Comparison-Contrast*
- *Definition*
- *Example*
- *Narration*
- *Metaphor*

These modes can be paragraphs unto themselves, or they can be strategies we use within the paragraphs. By the time they are seniors, LCHS students will have mastery over three primary paragraph structures:

5-Functions:

The most basic paragraph does 5 things:

- 1) Presents a topic sentence
- 2) Shows proof of that topic
- 3) Shows cause and effect in relation to the whole novel
- 4) Offers theme reader can carry away
- 5) Transitions into next paragraph

Example:

Romeo's love for Juliet is impatient and, therefore, not biblical. In Act 1, Scene 5, when Romeo has just met Juliet, he swears his affection to her "QUOTE . . ." As a result of his hasty action, he finds himself in a fight with Tybalt, who swears to avenge an "ancient grudge" that ultimately leads to his own death. This crisis shows the consequence of impatient relationship; impatience causes confusion and discord within families, and often sets a relationship on a dangerous course. Impatience does destroy this relationship, but it is one of several others that demonstrates how biblical relationships create healthy, honest communities.

Note:

We teach these paragraphs to freshman to push them away from "thinking on the page." They, like most people forced to do something, say, "Why can't I just do it my own way?" or, my favorite, "This is dumb."

As basic (or "dumb") as it may be, it's a building block -- the ground floor to something that virtually every teacher, writer, and (especially) reader expects when they enter into a relationship with the written text.

OCI Paragraph:

Another basic, more loose, structure that allows the writer to be more dialectic (more conversational, examining different angles) in exploring the implications of a written work. In it, the writer observes different elements of a written work, considers how those elements work, and interprets its theme and message. The paragraph does not prescribe any real format, but centers around relative clauses -- starting with *since, if, when, because, where*, etc, -- as a means of exploring possibilities.

These paragraphs are generally more open-ended and broad in scope (meaning they deal with a novel/poem/essay sequentially) and explore how conditions connect with the human condition.

The impatience in Romeo and Juliet demonstrates the problem of hasty love. At the beginning, Romeo cannot see himself apart from his love with Rosaline whom he "ne'er saw her match since the world first begun." This establishes Romeo as a hot-blooded Romantic who lives with his head in the clouds, but he soon trades one oppressive love for another in Juliet "who hangs upon the cheek at night." Since Romeo's heart quickly changes, he finds himself at odds with his friends, his family, and even his church. Mercutio, for instance, finds his best friend as a "humor, madman, passion, lover!", which captures Romeo's fickle moods, and demonstrates how love, when it is not faithful, patient, and kind can even disillusion even the closest of friends. Beyond the friendships he destroys, Romeo's heavenly talk of Juliet also shows how romantic notions alienates families, like the Capulets, who hate "peace, Capulets, and thee." By the end of the play, anyone connected to Romeo's midnight romance finds themselves on the run, in trouble with the law, or dead. Shakespeare uses Romeo to demonstrate youthful love; whereas most think of Romeo as the classic lover, Shakespeare seems to poke fun of Romeo's passion and reckless behavior. Therefore, in looking into Romeo's legendary relationship with Juliet, Shakespeare does not layout a classic roadmap for love, but explores the problems youthful passion create, and uses Romeo as a warning to his readers about placing romance over reality.

Deductive Response:

Deductive Response paragraphs are the most thoroughly academic responses and, therefore, the primary focus of AP Language Writing. These paragraphs show the writer's ability to 1) lay out an argument, 2) integrate Proof, 3) draw Conclusions, 4) Interpret material as a whole, and 5) Connect material to the Human Condition. It follows a very specific pattern:

Topic Sentence
Induction
Deduction
Induction
Deduction
Interpretation/Connection
Statement about Human Condition

Shakespeare uses Romeo to show the impact of youthful, hasty love. The contrast, between Romeo's feelings for Rosaline, who has made Romeo "a sick man in sadness" (I.1), and Juliet who "teaches the torches to burn bright" (I.4) sets the tone for the entire play. Shakespeare uses Romeo's fickle personality as an archetype; whereas all the other characters remain static (Benvolio peaceful, Mercutio playful and reckless, Capulet stubborn), Romeo's emotions are all over the map and acts without concern for other people's position. As he does, he overlooks the problems his desires have caused. In Act III, Scene 3, in a raged

designed to avenge "brave Mercutio's death", Romeo "begins the woe others must end", slaying Tybalt and being banished from Verona. Shakespeare entangles Romeo in romance and reality; the minute Romeo's mind lift to the clouds, something tangible brings him back to earth and throws him into fits of despair. In that sense, Shakespeare makes Romeo the most complete character of the play, and he shows Romeo as everything from a wimp (whining over lost love) to a hero (avenging his best friend's death). This leaves the reader with a clear-cut choice: believe in romance, which fails us, or be a skeptic, and live in a world where all people, fighters and lovers, die in the end.

Essay Writing

Categorizing essays helps to streamline the writing process; it creates familiarity with a few techniques instead of shooting in the dark, hoping that you hit something. Knowing the language helps you understand my expectations, thus increasing your chances for success. Knowing the language and knowing a teacher's expectations makes a difficult task more manageable.

I. Four General Categories of Essay

Historical - Examining work (or time Period) using events, attitudes, or trends of a given time

2. Benefit-- connects a body of literature to a larger historical context
3. Skills--Research, Interdisciplinary Study, broadens focus of lesson, Promotes Perspective

Example Prompts:

*How is Pip, in Great Expectations, groomed to be a Victorian Gentleman?
In To Kill a Mockingbird, how does Macon reflect race relations of her time?
How is Hamlet a Renaissance Man?*

Thematic--Examining a written work in relation to a given theme (or idea)

1. Benefit - helps to sharpen universal understanding of a written work .
2. Skills-- argumentation, critical thinking, classification, reflection

Example Prompts.

*Is the love in Romeo and Juliet biblical according to 1 Cor. 13?
How does Places in the Heart depict the value of family in times of trouble?
Does Martin Luther King's I Have a Dream reflect today's racial climate?*

Structural/Formal--Examining according to style or techniques used:

1. Benefit--helps students understand literary devices embedded within literature.
2. Skills--Research, Lecture Integration, and Synthesize definitions and terms, Promotes Application

Example Prompts:

How is Young Goodman Brown reflective of Gothic Literature?

Explain Allusion in The Giver?

How are elements of the pastoral evident in Don Quixote?

Personal - Connecting a student to a text, event, or topic through writing

1. Benefit–Personalizes a text or event and material to larger issues of life
2. Skills–Self-Knowledge; Introspection, promotes empathy, Interpretation,

Example Prompts:

How does Plato’s Allegory of the Cave reflect your personal path toward Enlightenment?

What symbolizes your first month of school?

Is _____ good or bad?

II. Four Major Writing Methods

Expository/Explanation/Expose

1. Purpose - To “expose” previously unknown information and basic knowledge of a given topic.
2. Skills–Research, Outlining, Synthesis, Interpretation, Narration, Explanation

Example Prompts:

What are the three main arms of the federal government?

What is Modernism?

Who are the Lake Poets, and what are the contributions to Western Literature?

Persuasive/Argue an Issue

1. Purpose - To create opinion about a given subject and argue (factually) to prove the opinion’s validity
2. Skills– Research, Argumentation, Categorization, Promotes Interpretation, Application, Interpretation.

Example Prompts:

Is euthanasia ever permissible?

Should the government allow flag burning?

Is Huckleberry Finn a hero?

Narrative/Tell a Story

1. Purpose - To tell a story or recount a personal experience.
2. Skills - Story telling, Universal Themes, Exploration, Self-Knowledge and Perspective.

Example Prompts:

What event has shaped you the most in the past year?

When did you realize you were a Christian?

Tell an experience when you felt like an outcast?

Description/Create a Vivid Impression

1. Purpose– To present a single, clear picture of a person, place, thing, idea
2. Skills– Attention to details, personal reflection, Empathy, Self-Knowledge, Process, Interpretation.

Example Prompts:

Tell about a time you felt patriotic?

Describe the first scene of Saving Private Ryan as if you were a reporter on the beach?

Define Atticus Finch's main characteristic?

III. Four Major Strategies

Correlation

1. Purpose - To examine the similarities/differences between article, books, arguments, people, events.
2. Skills - Research, Exemplification, Critical Thinking, Integration of Literary Components, Connectivity

Example Prompts:

How does the story of Jonah relate to The Giver?

What metaphor best describes Atticus Finch?

How would you handle the situation in _____?

Analysis

1. Purpose - To examine the relevant details of a written work or even for the sake of forming an opinion.
2. Skills - Inductive Reasoning, Deductive Reasoning, Critical Thinking, Cross-Curricular integration.

Example Prompts:

What is the theme The Great Gatsby?

Where are the archetypal forms in The Inferno?

What events from 1910-1914 led to the start of WWI?

Cause and Effect

1. Purpose - To examine the interconnectedness and outcomes of a written work or an historical event
2. Skills - Research, Critical Thinking, Sequential Communication, Interpretation and Self-Knowledge

Example Prompts:

What impact does the Depression have on _____?

Who is the most influential person in your life?

How does a car work?

Reflection

1. Purpose - To respond to a written work, experience, or an event
2. Skills - Personal Reflection, Attention to Details, Creating Empathy, Self-Knowledge and Perspective.

Example Prompts:

How does your faith reflect your opinions on underage drinking?

What's the best way to generate personal income?

How does a car work?

Strategies and Benchmarks:

Your formal writing assignments will be given in this language. The instructions will be a combination of the three:

Example Prompts:

Write an Historical-Expository Essay in which you correlate _____

Write an Argumentative-Form Essay in which you analyze archetypes of _____

Write an Personal-Persuasive Essay in which you reflect on _____