

English 10 Journals

It is very important that students are able to write about everyday issues and reflect on past experiences. About every other day there will be a journal writing assignment on the board that will allow students to write about worldly issues, reading assignments, or personal experiences. Students will be given the first 5 - 10 minutes of class to complete their journal. On days without a writing topic there will be a grammar exercise or an alternative writing exercise. It is extremely important that students are sitting in their assigned seats working on the journal assignment as soon as the tardy bell rings. Each written journal entry should have the journal topic, the journal number, and the date of the journal entry written at the top of the page. Every written journal should be a minimum of 5 complete sentences; free writes should be a minimum of 10 sentences. Once a journal is written you should proof read it and type a final copy. You should have a typed copy of every written journal or else your journals will not be accepted. Each journal is worth 10 points each. All journals must be stapled together when they are turned in. Separated journal entries will not be accepted. Journals are collected every couple weeks to be graded and are a significant part of each student's grade.

Common Problems

* *Elaborate* - to work out carefully, to add details to, or expand in order to develop clarity.

The number one problem that students have with their written journal responses is writing elaborate responses that deal with the topic. The point of the journal responses is not to merely address a quote or to write the first thing that comes into one's mind. The point is to carefully think over a topic and insightfully respond to the topic using specific examples and evidence to support one's point of the view. Responses need to be clear and need to use *specific* examples to show full understanding. Specific examples are detailed explanations or situations that you explain in order to prove your point.

Written journal responses will be graded on the following criteria:

Journal Procedures: Journals should be a minimum of 5 complete sentences. FREE WRITES should be a minimum of 10 complete sentences. A complete sentence expresses a complete thought. Proof read your sentences to make sure that they are complete and they don't run together or depend on another sentence. Don't write one long sentence for your response. There should be only 2 journals on a side of a page. Separate your topics and your responses by indenting the journal responses.

Journal Structure: Each journal response should have 3 parts: a topic sentence that explains the meaning of the quote, a supporting example that proves or illustrates the topic sentence, and an explanation that explains the example and ties it back to the journal topic.

Addressing the entire topic: Make sure that you are following the directions, don't just write about how you feel or what you think, unless the topic specifically asks you what

you think. Don't refer to yourself in your response unless you are describing a story with you in it or giving a personal narrative. Don't write "I think this means" or "I don't know what this means." Make sure your response deals with the entire quote; don't just write about one part of the quote. Don't write "That is what the quote means."

Typing Written Responses: All journal responses must be: double spaced (lines, not words), 12 point font, Times New Roman font, 1' inch margins, Blue or Black ink, Separate the topics from the responses (indent your responses). No spill over on separate pages – the full topic and response must be on the same page.

Taking Journals Seriously

Students need to treat the daily journal assignment like a formal writing assignment. Many times students' writing becomes lazy because they don't feel like the assignment is important. The journal entries are meant to improve students' writing skills, not help them create bad habits that hinder their ability to communicate effectively. Students' laziness and inability to take the journals seriously lead to: mistakes with capitalization, misspellings, bad use of punctuation, poor sentence structure, unclear sentences, unneeded words, unnecessary abbreviations, and other poor writing habits. The following mistakes have been reviewed fully and will lose 5 points if found in journal responses:

1. Not writing the **ENTIRE** topic: including "Explain what the quote means. Use specific examples to support your point. Elaborate on your examples to tie to the topic."
2. Not using punctuation – not putting a period, question mark, or exclamation point at the end of a sentence to show the end of your thought.
3. Not capitalizing proper nouns and pronouns (Tehachapi, Mike, I, ect). Not capitalizing titles: Siddhartha, Halo 3, Wal-Mart. Not capitalizing words at the beginning of a sentence. Capitalizing random letters and words that should not be capitalized.
4. Misusing or misspelling the words: I, I'm, there, their, they're, where, were, we're, wear, your, you're, rite, right, write, ~~wright~~ (this is not a word it is someone's name), cause, because, which, witch, to, too, two, know, no, now, our, are, hole, whole, loose, lose, college, ~~alot~~ (should be **a lot**).
5. Inappropriate abbreviations: wanna, gonna, sorta, kinda, cuz, LOL, OMG, C, U, R, and anything similar to any of these.
6. Writing inappropriate responses.

AUTOMATIC ZERO: Not having a written and typed copy of your journals.

***Typed journals will not be graded if the written journal is not complete. The 2 copies do NOT have to be identical, but the typed response should be an improvement from the written response. If the written response only has one or two sentences and is not complete then the typed response will receive a ZERO! Anyone caught copying the typed version of their journals onto their written copy of their journals will automatically receive a ZERO for the entire set of journals. The writing process should be completed in the appropriate order or else the entire assignment will receive a ZERO!**