ENGLISH 10 ESSAY ASSIGNMENTS SCHEDULE FOR PARCC PREP

THIS SCHEDULE COVERS WRITING ASSIGNMENTS FOR THE NEXT THREE WEEKS: The PARCC practice test you received in email Tuesday, February 10th, requires you to write three essays. IT IS SET UP JUST LIKE THE REAL EXAM, WHICH WILL OCCUR OVER THREE DAYS IN MARCH (March 11, 12, and 13). The 90-minute writing TASK is on day one and it will probably be the simulated research essay described below. The narrative and literary essays will probably be on days two and three and the writing time will be about 50 minutes for each task. We teachers are learning more about this process each day.

For the grade book, we will write the three PARCC-style essays over the next three weeks. The value will be 100 points per essay. We will also practice using PARCC tools online as PEARSON refines the practice tests. I see improvements every day, but I have also seen the practice site crash every day. Not good!

The Essay Due Dates below are based on a tentative schedule because PARCC is making changes everyday and teachers are doing the best we can to get you ready for the exam. Stay FLEXIBLE and we will try to do the same.

NOTE: Although you are doing these essay tasks on your computers like normal writing assignments, you will have to use a variety of unfamiliar tools for the same tasks when the real exam occurs. Rest assured, each week, we will get online and play with the PARCC tools for these specific reading and writing assignments so that nothing will surprise you March 11. We will probably do this as bell-ringers so we can give you as much time to write in class as possible. Meanwhile, check the essay due dates, task descriptions, and explanations below for more information.

STEPS FOR SUCCESS ON EACH ESSAY ASSIGNMENT: Regardless which essay you write first, you should do the following steps BEFORE writing:

• Step One: Check the PARCC rubric for the assignment. It is attached to the same email as this Assignment Schedule.

• Step Two: Read the passages and the multiple-choice questions that pertain to the specific writing prompt. PARCC claims the questions are designed to guide your writing tasks.

• Step Three: Read the writing prompt for each essay and make certain you understand what the prompt is really asking. You will have a vocabulary handout to refresh your memory, but you should already know terms like rhetoric, synthesis, argument, evidence, literary analysis, narrative, character traits, setting elements, events or conflicts, sources, and research simulation. If not, let’s review these terms and make certain you are comfortable with what the prompts are asking you to do.

• Step Four: for the literary and research essays, plan your thesis statement and the order of your arguments or ideas before you start writing.

• Step Five: Put your thesis and preview of key ideas into your introductory paragraph.

• Remember: the real exam essays are timed. You have about 50-minutes or so to write each essay (roughly one class period) and you will have no help from a teacher or other students. That is why we are going to spend three weeks getting you up to speed on PARCC-style exams. We have already practiced PARCC-style Multiple Choice questions, but you need to understand how critical they are to writing an effective response to the essay prompts.

Multiple-Choice Questions: All three essays are based on close-reading of passages in the practice test that require readers to make inferences for Part A responses, and then identify evidence for Part B answers to multiple-choice questions. Most of you have already seen these questions on the computer version of this test if your computer worked during the practice sessions. We have since learned that answering Part B questions first, helps you answer the Part A questions correctly.
ESSAY SCORING:
Each week you will have two kinds of assessment: **formative** and **summative**. For formative assessment you will receive **10-points** in the grade book for just showing me your essay ideas roughed out on a PAGES document. Your summative assessment will be **100-points** for each essay based on a conversion of the PARCC-rubrics.

- **Formative Assessment**: you will show me the essay you are writing. We will have a short, informal discussion of your ideas and your approach to the assignment. I will give you advice and turn you loose to finish the assignment as needed.

- **Summative Assessment**: you will turn in the finished essay for **holistic** grading against the rubric. The rubric is 11 points. Essays scoring 10-11 are **advanced**; essays scoring 8-9 are **proficient**; essays scoring 6-7 are **nearing proficiency**; essays scoring 5 or lower are **developing** writers. Converting the rubric to a 100-point scale looks like this:

  **Conversion of PARCC Rubric:**
  - 11 = 98-100 points
  - 10 = 90-98 points
  - 9 = 80-89 points
  - 8 = 70-79 points
  - 7 = 60-69 points
  - 6 = 50-59 points
  - 5 = 40-49 points

**Revisions for higher scores**: If you score 75-points on the finished draft of each essay, that will be pretty good. But you can do better. You will have one chance to revise graded essays for higher points as long as you submit all the work on time for formative and summative assessments. The due dates below will give you far more time to think and write each of the three essays than you will have on the actual exam, but our purpose is to get you thinking about how to handle each task during crunch time. If this works as planned, you will get quick feedback on what you are doing well and what you need to improve.

**DUE DATES ESSAY ONE:**
- Formative assessment Tuesday, February 17th
- Summative assessment Wednesday, February 18th.

**DUE DATES ESSAY TWO:**
- Formative assessment Friday, February 20th
- Summative assessment Monday, February 23rd

**DUE DATES ESSAY THREE:**
- Formative assessment on Wednesday, February 25th
- Summative assessment Thursday, February 26th

**DUE DATES FOR REVISIONS:**
- Wednesday, March 4.
**Essay Prompts:** As noted earlier, you may respond to the prompts in any order you wish, so long as you show me your progress on one essay each formative assessment day for the next three weeks. For this assignment schedule, essays will be discussed in the order they appear on the practice test.

- The first essay prompt is the **literary essay** (question 7 on the practice test).
- The second essay prompt is the **research simulation essay** (question 17 on the practice test).
- The third essay prompt is the **narrative essay** (question 23 on the test).

Pictures of all three prompts are shown below. Beneath each picture is an explanation of how to write the essay so you have a chance to do well on the assignments and the exam.

**THE LITERARY ESSAY (QUESTION 7 ON PARCC PRACTICE)**

7. You have read two passages, one from Jacey Choy’s “Red Cranes” and one from Jun’ichirō Tanizaki’s “The Firefly Hunt.” Though Mie and Sachiko, the main characters in the passages, have certain similarities, the authors develop their characters in very different ways.

Write an essay in which you analyze the different approaches the authors take to develop these characters. In your essay, be sure to discuss how each author makes use of such elements as:

- the main characters’ interactions with other characters,
- the presentation of the main characters’ thoughts, and
- the strong feelings each character experiences at the end of each passage.

Use specific evidence from both passages to support your analysis.

**Explanation of the Prompt:** This literary essay prompt is asking you to contrast the techniques two authors use to develop characters in their stories. Your thesis will argue that each author uses a different approach to reveal characters that really similar to one another. To prove this claim, you must show how the author strategies are different in three ways: (1) interactions between characters in each story are different, (2) the way characters think in each story are different, and (3) the strong feelings experienced by the main characters at the end of each story are different. Your actual thesis and preview may be a little different, but you hopefully get the idea. A good introductory paragraph proves to the reader that you know how to organize your arguments to support your thesis. If you deliver on this promise with evidence and reasoning in your body paragraphs, you will do well on the exam.

**NOTE:** Please do NOT use personal examples in the PARCC essays. The test-makers are looking at your ability to use evidence from the reading selections.

**Plan on writing two to three body paragraphs:** To use examples from each story, and to explain why the examples are relevant, you will probably need three body paragraphs to discuss (1) character interactions in both stories, (2) character thoughts in the two stories, and (3) character feelings in the two stories. That means this prompt is set up for a five-paragraph essay just like a prompt on an AP exam. That said, some very good AP-level essays are only three paragraphs long, including the introduction and conclusion paragraphs, but the writers really know how to use evidence and commentary to make their points and their hand-written essays are still two to three pages long! Either way, this is a tough task that takes practice. And, regardless how many body paragraphs
you write, you will need an introduction paragraph and a conclusion paragraph. Follow the format below for success:

- **Introduction:** You should write your claim about the author's different techniques as the thesis in your first paragraph. You should also preview the key points you will make to prove this claim: different characters' interactions, different characters' thoughts, and different characters' feelings.

- **Body Paragraph One:** You should explain how characters in each story reveal the theme. Use specific details from the stories. Your commentary should explain why the evidence is proof of your claim in the introduction. Transition to BP two to continue building your case to support your thesis.

- **Body Paragraph Two:** You should explain how events in each story reveal the theme. Again, use specific details for evidence. You case is almost complete. Transition to BP Three.

- **Body Paragraph Three:** You should explain how the settings of each story reveal the theme. Use specific details so there is no question about what the writers intended with their descriptions of the settings. You are now ready to wrap it up with your concluding paragraph.

- **Conclusion:** You remind the reader why you believe the development of characters, the sequence of events, and the settings in these two stories support your claim that the common theme in these stories is what you said it was in your introduction. You have now written an essay that will pass PARCC, EoC, SBA, or any college class you will ever take.

**Advice for timed essays:** During the actual exam, you will have 50 minutes to write this kind of essay. For this prompt, you need to figure out the differences in author strategies quickly and then immediately choose the right evidence for each body paragraph. The literary essay on the real exam will be similar but may require different comparisons or contrasts between two stories. On the actual exam, you will be able to highlight the stories using the pdf highlighter tool in PARCC. You will also be able to use the note-taking tool to remind yourself what is important.

**Annotate for Success:** I have been told you will not have much time for a pre-write, so annotation (notes about what you have highlighted while reading) will help you categorize and organize your evidence for the essay. Use your annotation notes to write your claim and your preview of key arguments into the introduction paragraph immediately. Then use evidence from the stories to prove your key ideas in each of the body paragraphs. Make certain your commentary explains why the evidence is relevant to your thesis. If you have time on the actual exam, the conclusion will be icing on the cake. For this class assignment, your conclusion is required.

**THE SIMULATED RESEARCH ESSAY (QUESTION 17 ON PARCC PRACTICE)**

17. You have just read three sources discussing the Supreme Court case of *Tinker v. Des Moines*:

- the United States Supreme Court majority opinion by Chief Justice Abe Fortas
- the United States Supreme Court dissenting opinion by Justice Hugo Black
- a transcript of a radio interview with law professor Catherine Ross

Consider the points made by each source about the issues surrounding the *Tinker v. Des Moines* case.

Write an essay analyzing the arguments of those who believe certain kinds of speech should be prohibited within an educational setting and those who believe the opposite. Base the analysis on the specifics of the *Tinker v. Des Moines* case and the arguments and principles set forth in the sources. The essay should consider at least two of the sources presented.
**Explanation of the Prompt:** This prompt is asking you to write an informative essay. You will be using at least two of the three sources to prove your claim – or thesis – that some forms of speech are protected in the public education system, but not all speech is protected in this environment. This prompt could be reduced to a three-paragraph essay, but lends itself better to four paragraphs. Your job is to present an unbiased explanation of key arguments for and against first amendment rights in the education system. The prompt does not ask you to take sides on the issue. Your commentary should be unbiased. Your essay should be like what Fox News reporters claim to do: “We report; you decide.”

- **The introduction** has your explanation about why free speech in public schools is not a clear black and white issue. You then preview the key ideas you will develop from the source documents.
- **One to two body paragraphs** will allow you to develop the evidence from at least two sources explaining why some forms of speech are Constitutionally protected in the public school setting and why some forms of speech are not protected. If the Supreme Court is involved in the process, then you know it is a Constitutional issue.
- **The conclusion** reminds the reader why Supreme Court justices might agree or disagree on Constitutional issues like protection of first amendment rights.

**Advice for Writing Informative Essays Using Documents:** Use quotes from each of the sources. Make certain you identify the documents immediately after the quotes in parentheses. Then, you must explain why the quotes suggest this issue is clearly debatable. Stay neutral on the issue and try to be fair in presenting both sides of the argument.

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**THE NARRATIVE (QUESTION 23 ON PARCC PRACTICE)**

23. After discovering that his wife has gone missing from the bicycle they were sharing, Mr. Harris returns “to where the road broke into four” and seems unable to remember where he has come from. Using what you know about Mr. Harris, write a narrative story that describes how he chooses which road to take and the experiences he has on his return journey.

Be sure to use details from the passage in developing your narrative.

**Explanation of the prompt:** This is the most unusual writing assignment on the PARCC exam. Your must finish the story that someone else started. You will decide how Mr. Harris is going to find the right road back to his missing wife. Meanwhile, she is trying to find him but she cannot speak Dutch. The fact that this young couple eventually debate who said what to whom, and how she ended-up off the bike, is evidence that they did find each other again. Your task is to explain how that happened.

Mr. Harris does not get much help in this endeavor from the Dutch farmers he encounters at the intersection of four roads. To solve the problem, you must understand the traits of young Mr. Harris and his wife. You must also pay attention to details of the setting. And it helps to know how to write dialogue. Perhaps Mr. Harris is asking the Dutchmen the wrong questions. As we say in America, “Questions are the Answer!” Mr. Harris apparently speaks Dutch, but he apparently does not understand Dutch culture.

**Advice for writing this narrative:** You must become the author of this story. You must write from the same point of view, use the same character traits for Mr. Harris and his wife that the writer has already revealed, and you must use the same setting elements that the author has already provided you in the story stem. This may take a page or two of writing and lots of imagination. It is kind of fun, but it is a timed essay so you need to be ready to jump on it.