**The Journal Project**

****During the first semester of Grade 9 ELA, you worked really hard at becoming strong writers. It would be a crying shame to lose all those writing skills for lack of practice! To continue to build on these skills, you will be starting an ELA journal.

**Journaling: FAQ**

**What is a journal?**

A journal is a record of events and information wrapped up into one nice, neat little package.

**What is an ELA journal?**

An ELA journal is a place where you can build upon the writing skills you already have, as well as work towards acquiring new skills. It is a place to experiment, daydream, doodle, and reflect. Ultimately, however, it is a place to work towards being the best writer you can be.

**What do I journal about?**

Whatever you want. I will provide you with 2-3 prompts to choose from each week and you may feel free to select one of these prompts, or you may choose your own. Your writing can be fiction or nonfiction and take on any form you wish. The only requirement when it comes to topic and form is that you mix it up. Don’t write about the same thing, in the same way each week.

**How often will we journal?**

Twice a week for twenty minutes. Every Tuesday and Thursday.

**Who reads my journal?**

You. And me – if you want me to. If you choose to write about something too personal to share, or you are not ready to share a piece of writing because it needs more work, you may choose to write “do not read” at the top of your entry. The benefit to having me read your work is that I can 1) get to know you a little better and 2) I can offer suggestions as to what you are doing really well, and what you could improve on in the future.

**Will my journal be graded?**

No. And yes. Your weekly journal entries will not be graded – this is your “rough draft,” or, “practice” time. This is when the risks will happen. This is when you will try out new topics, types of writing, styles, forms, point-of-views, and literary devices. Each month, you will end up with a total of 4 (if you choose a new topic each week) – 8 (if you choose a new topic each journaling day) entries. At the end of the month, you get to choose which one you would like to finish, revise, and hand in for assessment.

**Journaling: Assessment**

**How will my journal be assessed?**

By you. And me. Assessment will follow the 4C model: Criteria, Completion, Comparison and Consultation. Want more details?

**C1: Criteria** – After choosing a journal entry for assessment, and before making revisions, define 3 criteria that your piece will be assessed on (ex. grammar, rhythm, descriptive details, word choice, paragraphing, developed ideas). Take a look at the ELA rubrics I’ve used in the past to assess your writing in order to give you an idea. The 3 criteria you choose should be **well-suited** to your form (ex. you could assess then “rhythm” of a poem, but not-so-much a user manual), and your writing goals (i.e. the specific skills you want to improve on as a writer).

**C2: Completion** – After defining your criteria using the rubric provided in class, polish off your chosen journal entry. This means finishing it (beginning, middle and end), proofreading it (for mechanical errors), revising it (changing the language and content to make it even better), and rewriting it inside a Word document. Make all changes to your rough copy using a different colour of pen. In order to be graded, your journal entry needs to be **complete.**

**C3: Comparison** – Use the rubric you created to **self-assess** your piece. Instead of measuring your performance in comparison with other Grade 9 students, measure your performance in comparison with yourself. Ask yourself: Did I improve “insert skill here” a lot (5)? A reasonable amount (4)? A little (3)? Not at all (2)? Or Did I do worse than I’ve done in the past (1)? The only way to get a 0/5 is to not complete the assignment.

**C4: Consultation** – As you assess yourself, think about **why** you are giving yourself each mark. Before you are officially awarded the mark you wrote down on your rubric, you will have to consult with Ms. Hammond. During this consultation, the two of you will read through both your piece and your rubric together and discuss the validity of the mark you’ve awarded yourself. Consultations will take place on Tuesdays and Thursdays during regular journaling time, and will be approximately 5 minutes in length.

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