**Personal Response to Texts**

* The Personal Response to Texts Assignment requires that students respond to texts and a question to explore the ideas and impressions that students may also explore in the Critical/Analytical Response to Literary Texts Assignment. In other words, both written expressions will be on the same topic.
* You must choose a PROSE form to create a personal response
* Prose Form - short essay, diary entry, reminiscence, newspaper article, editorial, interior monologue, short story, personal observation, letter, eulogy, interview, rebuttal, screen play, speech, anecdote, commentary
* Students are encouraged to create their own voice and choose a prose form that fits with their intended audience.
* You must choose a perspective to use:
* Personal, Critical or Creative
* Students are to write a short, but developed response showing logical thought.
* You will be marked equally on ideas & impressions and presentation.

**Essential Elements of Personal Response:**

* a **controlling idea**, thesis statement or **theme** – take the key word from the topic and create a general statement with a specific focus
* frequent mention of the **topic** – stay focused on the topic throughout the response
* organization – personal, critical/analytical or creative
* specific details
* reference to at least one of the **texts** given
* use the controlling idea to find a parallel in your life or someone close to you
* try to support your personal connection with details from the text(s)
* use a **prose form** to respond

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| **Part One: Analyzing the Text(s)**  1) Introduce the selected text(s) and the theme or **controlling idea** related to the given **topic**. It is best to focus on one text or if you choose more than one text you must focus on both equally and integrate your controlling idea throughout.  2) Select **3 to 5 specific details** that support your identified controlling idea or theme. (See the following focus questions for specific details for analyzing different genres) |

**Focus Questions for Different Genres**

**Fiction – Short Stories and Novel Excerpts:**

Details may include the following:

* a specific plot event or occurrence, or pattern of occurrences
* a plot conflict as experienced by the central character, and the resolution or non-resolution of that conflict
* a character’s motivation, crisis, reaction, development, turning point or epiphany
* character contrast
* the setting of the story (physical, social, emotional or psychological) and the mood that setting evokes
* the author’s perspective towards the events of the story; the tone
* a stated or implied central irony of the story
* the author’s use of specific motifs or symbols
* the author’s choice of connotative language and sense imagery

**Poetry:**

Details may include the following:

* visualize a key image, moment or scene from the poem and relate to the poem’s conflict or controlling idea
* Which lines, words or images are the most memorable? Which are important or essential to the meaning of the poem?
* What questions, issues, or concerns does this poem raise for you?
* identify the author’s purpose and theme
* establish the context and tone or attitude of the poem
* denotative/literal meaning and connotative/figurative meaning of words or lines
* identify important figures of speech: metaphors, symbols, allusions
* relationship between the techniques used and the meaning and theme communicated

**Visuals:**

Details may include the following:

* What does the image make you feel? Think about? Or remember about feelings, experiences, and situations?
* Subject Matter:
* What is happening in the image? Is the subject looking at or responding to anything else?
* How does added text add meaning?
* Visual Techniques:
* Is the image black & white or colour? How does this influence the viewer’s perception?
* What is in the foreground? Mid-ground? Background?
* Does the image focus on anything specific?
* What is the angle of the shot? How does this influence the viewer’s perception?
* Are there any special effects?
* Choices:
* Major shapes/colours? What do these symbolically represent?
* Is the image symmetrically or asymmetrically balanced?
* Are there any obvious patters? Or contrasts? What does this suggest?
* Purpose:
* What is the most striking thing about the image?
* Mood? Attitude?
* Is the image expressing an idea? Documenting a fact? Sending a message?

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| **Part Two: Drawing a Personal Connection**  1) Reflect upon and describe an **incident** that relates to the stated main idea, theme or **controlling idea** addressed in part one.  2) The personal incident should be drawn from your **own experience** or the experience of the following:   * a close relation: parent, sibling, or grandparent * a more distant relation * a friend or neighbor * something that you read about (factual or fictional) * something that you viewed on film, television, or other visual media   3) The event you describe must show what you learned from the event and should **relate purposefully to the topic** given. You must explain the connection between the two experiences. |

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| **Part Three: A Global Generalization**  1) In what way are the ideas of the author **universal**? Reflect on the significance of the author’s ideas and how well ideas shed light upon the human condition. What makes those ideas important to all people, in all places, at all times?  2) **Evaluate** the truth that lies at the heart of the author’s thinking.  3) Make sure your generalization is related to the **topic** given and your chosen controlling idea regarding that topic. |

One prose form that you may use to organize your ideas can be deconstructed as follows:

1. State the author, title and your controlling idea in the first few sentences.
2. In the next few sentences, provide specific details from one or more of the given texts that prove your idea. (integrate quotes)
3. Compare yourself to someone or the theme in the following sentences. Make sure to use details from the given text to show how you’ve identified with the message.
4. Conclude your essay with one or two sentences leading toward an insightful generalization about the topic.

Remember that if you do NOT choose to write a traditional essay, all of the items above should still be included.

***Initial Planning***

Your initial planning is an essential element of writing a personal response to text. Your planning will assist markers in identifying the text or texts to which you are responding.

After a close reading of the texts, answer the following:

1. To which of the provided texts are you responding? **Why?**

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2. For each text you will reference, briefly **identify the central idea that is most relevant to what you intend to explore.**

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3. Briefly identify what idea you intend to explore (theme statement). **How does your controlling idea address the topic?**

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4. State your choice of prose form and perspective. You may respond using a personal, creative or analytical perspective. Do not use poetic form. **Why choose this form?**

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