**Reading Materials for Basics in English Writing**

**Part I**

**Salvation**

***Langston Hughes***

I was saved from sin when I was going on thirteen. But not really saved. It happened like this. There was a big revival at my Auntie Reed’s church. Every night for weeks there had been much preaching, singing, praying, and shouting, and some very hardened sinners had been brought to Christ, and the membership of the church had grown by leaps and bounds. Then just before the revival ended, they held a special meeting for children, “to bring the young lambs to the fold.” My aunt spoke of it for days ahead. That night I was escorted to the front row and placed on the mourners’ bench with all the other young sinners, who had not yet been brought to Jesus.  
 My aunt told me that when you were saved you saw a light, and something happened to you inside! And Jesus came into your life! And God was with you from then on! She said you could see and hear and feel Jesus in your soul. I believed her. I had heard a great many old people say the same thing and it seemed to me they ought to know. So I sat there calmly in the hot, crowded church, waiting for Jesus to come to me.  
 The preacher preached a wonderful rhythmical sermon, all moans and shouts and lonely cries and dire pictures of hell, and then he sang a song about the ninety and nine safe in the fold, but one little lamb was left out in the cold. Then he said: “Won’t you come? Won’t you come to Jesus? Young lambs, won’t you come?” And he held out his arms to all us young sinners there on the mourners’ bench. And the little girls cried. And some of them jumped up and went to Jesus right away. But most of us just sat there.  
 A great many old people came and knelt around us and prayed, old women with jet-black faces and braided hair, old men with work-gnarled hands. And the church sang a song about the lower lights are burning, some poor sinners to be saved. And the whole building rocked with prayer and song.  
 Still I kept waiting to see Jesus.  
 Finally all the young people had gone to the altar and were saved, but one boy and me. He was a rounder’s son named Westley. Westley and I were surrounded by sisters and deacons praying. It was very hot in the church, and getting late now. Finally Westley said to me in a whisper: “Goddamit,  I’m tired o’ sitting here. Let’s get up and be saved.” So he got up and was saved.  
 Then I was left all alone on the mourners’ bench. My aunt came and knelt at my knees and cried, while prayers and songs swirled all around me in the little church. The whole congregation prayed for me alone, in a mighty wail of moans and voices. And I kept waiting serenely for Jesus, waiting, waiting – but he didn’t come. I wanted to see him, but nothing happened to me. Nothing! I wanted something to happen to me, but nothing happened.  
 I heard the songs and the minister saying: “Why don’t you come? My dear child, why don’t you come to Jesus? Jesus is waiting for you . He wants you. Why don’t you come? Sister Reed, what is this child’s name?”  
 “Langston,” my aunt sobbed.  
 “Langston, why don’t you come? Why don’t you come and be saved? Oh, Lamb of God! Why don’t you come?”  
 Now it was really getting late. I began to be ashamed of myself, holding everyone up so long. I began to wonder what God thought about Westley, who certainly hadn’t seen Jesus either, but who was now sitting proudly on the platform, swinging his knicker bockered legs and grinning down at me, surrounded by deacons and old women on their knees praying. God had not struck Westley dead for taking his name in vain or for lying in the temple. So I decided that maybe to save further trouble, I’d better lie, too, and say that Jesus had come, and get up and be saved.  
 So I got up.  
 Suddenly the whole room broke into a sea of shouting, as they saw me rise. Waves of rejoicing swept the place. Women leaped in the air. My aunt threw her arms around me. The minister took me by the hand and led me to the platform.

When things quieted down, in a hushed silence, punctuated by a few ecstatic “amens,” all the new young lambs were blessed in the name of God. Then joyous singing filled the room.

That night, for the first time in my life but one – for I was a big boy twelve years old – I cried, in bed alone, and couldn’t stop. I buried my head under the quilts, but my aunt heard me. She woke up and told my uncle I was crying because the Holy Ghost had come into my life, and because I had seen Jesus. But I was really crying because I couldn’t bear to tell her that I had lied, that I had deceived everybody in the church, and hadn’t seen Jesus, and that now I didn’t believe there was a Jesus any more, since he didn’t come to help me.

**Introduction to the Author**

Langston Hughes (1902-1967) was a renowned African American essayist, poet and author during the resurgence of African American literature in the early 20th century. His essay illustrates the toxic power of experiential faith applied by group pressure demanding religious submission at the cost of true conviction. This is a testimony that the Pentecostal and Charismatic movement surely needs to hear more than it ever has before.

**Exercises**

**I. Elements of a Story**

**Surf on the Internet to figure of the definitions of the five elements of a story.**

Character all the qualities and features that make a person, groups of people, and places different from others

Setting a set of surroundings; the place at which sth happens

Plot the series of events which form the story of a novel, play, film/movie, etc

Conflict a situation in which people, groups or countries are involved in a serious disagreement or argument

Theme the subject or main idea in a talk, piece of writing or work of art

**After reading the text, please answer the Following Questions briefly.**

1) Who are involved in the story? Who is going to be saved?

The boy and his aunt and many Jesus.

Jesus.

2) What is *salvation* in religious sense? Religiously speaking, how is a person saved?

you saw a light, and something happened to you inside!

And Jesus came into your life! And God was with you from then on!

3) Was the salvation of young Langston Hughes easy? Why or why not?

No

He prayed religiously but nothing happended.

4) Why did Langston Hughes cry when he went home? To him, what did salvation mean?

He lied to others,he hadn’t seen Jesus.

He didn’t believe there was a Jesus any more, since he didn’t come to help me.

5) How do you understand *salvation*?

Don’t trust others and make sure you can save yourself.

**II. Ways to develop a story**.

**Surf on the Internet to figure out what the narrative strategies are.**

Narrative order the order of narration

Narrative purpose the purpose of narration

Dialogue the conversations between people in the story

Description the description of the story and main character

**Think about our Text and answer the following questions briefly.**

1) In what order does the author tell the story? How do you know?

Time.

The time in the story

2) What is the author’s purpose of telling this story? What does he want to tell?

To tell people when you are actually in trouble,the Jesus don’t save you.

Only you can save yourself.

3) Can you figure out any dialogue in the story? Why is it necessary?

“Langston,” my aunt sobbed.  
 “Langston, why don’t you come? Why don’t you come and be saved? Oh, Lamb of God! Why don’t you come?”  
We can know the feelings of the people from what they say.

4) Are the scenes made lively through language appealing to the reader’s senses of smell, touch, sight, and sound? How? Any examples to show?

Yes.By appending dialogues and psychological profiles to the story.

“But I was really crying because I couldn’t bear to tell her that I had lied, that I had deceived everybody in the church, and hadn’t seen Jesus, and that now I didn’t believe there was a Jesus any more, since he didn’t come to help me.”

**A Better Place**

***Tara Coburn***

The phrase “be careful what you wish for” really started to make sense to me when I was sixteen. I had always wished that my parents would stop fighting. When they announced that they were getting a divorce, though, I regretted ever hoping for it. Later that year, when my mother moved into an apartment, the relationship between us began to change drastically. During the first weeks that she was gone, I handled these changes very badly. I thought that my relationship with my mother was doomed. Gradually, however, my expectations became more realistic and my perspective broadened. I now realize that the divorce has actually brought my mother and me to a better place.

Before my parents even began considering divorce, my ties with my mother were not as strong as I wanted them to be. We tried to become close, but our relationship always took a backseat to the relationship between my parents. Near the end of their marriage, not a day went by without a major fight between them. The constant turmoil and distractions in the house kept both of us from becoming close with each other. Because of the stress and unhappiness in our lives, our relationship was never more than a shallow bond.

Even though the situation between us was not what I wanted, the changes after the divorce hit me very hard. For a while, I thought that I was dealing with it well. It was not until the night that my mother moved out that I panicked. I remember standing outside where she had dropped my off when I suddenly realized that I was going into a house where my mother did not live. Feelings of betrayal and abandonment that I had kept hidden began to overwhelm me. As I began to cry, I turned to her and started screaming. I told her that she did not love me and she was going to forget about me. I knew that I did not mean what I said, but I could not help myself. The pain of that loss really deafened me from hearing how awful I sounded, and I said a lot that I wish I had not.

Because I have had time to reflect on that night, I have come to realize that I reacted very irrationally. It was my own stubborn selfishness that prevented me from realizing that our new situation was a chance to become closer. This opportunity became clear to me one day when I was visiting my mother’s apartment. My father called to talk to her, and soon after, the distantly familiar sounds of shouting started coming from the other room. I was shocked. It had been a pleasantly long time since I had heard them fight. That was a major turning point in my view of my mother because I could see how calmer, friendlier environments made both of our lives better. I see now that my mother was trying to help both of us while I was busy feeling sorry for myself. In the end, a lot of the hurt subsided from both of us, and I was able to see that she really made a wise choice.

Seeing my relationship with my mother from both of our perspectives not only made me feel better, but it also changed how I treat my mother. Before I judge her actions, I try to remind myself that she has gone through a lot. She and I are very different people, and I have accepted that I will not always agree with her. This was probably one of the most valuable things that I have discovered. I never really knew her before the divorce because our lives were so hectic. Communicating with her is much easier now, so I have gotten to know her better. We are different people, but I really like the person that she is. We have fun together. Our relationship is ow I had always wanted it to be; it just needed space.

**Read Tara’s essay and then think about the following questions.**

1) How is it different from Langston Hughes’ story Salvation? *(You can approach the question from the perspective of the story itself, the organizing strategies, the ways of writing, etc.)*

More Psychological descriptions and few dialogues.

The theme is different.

2) What is Tara’s purpose of writing such an essay? What does she want to convey to us?

Seeing my relationship with my mother from both of our perspectives not only made me feel better, but it also changed how I treat my mother. Our relationship is ow I had always wanted it to be; it just needed space.

Look at problems from two sides

3) How does Tara make her essay touching, and moving?

She wrote his own feelings in this essay,and most of us have the same problem or confusion

4) How does Tara change in viewing the relationship between her mom and her? Which view benefit her a lot?

Because I have had time to reflect on that night, I have come to realize that I reacted very irrationally.

We are different people

**Writing Exercises**

**I. Description**

**Definition of Descriptive Essay**

**A descriptive essay**, as the name implies, is a form of essay that describes something. In this genre, students are assigned the task of describing objects, things, places, experiences, persons, and situations. The students use sensory information to enable readers to use their five senses of touch, taste, smell, hearing, and sight to understand the topic of the essay.

Qualities of a Descriptive Essay

* Clear and Concise
* Use of Images
* Use of Five Senses

As far as clear and concise language is concerned, it is necessary to describe things precisely. Imagery is used to make things seem real and remarkable. The use of the five senses creates the imagery, or a mental picture, for each reader.

**Difference Between a Description and a Descriptive Essay**

A description could be just a paragraph, or it could be longer, as needed to fully describe the thing. However, a descriptive essay has five paragraphs. It is written in a coherent way with a good [thesis statement](https://literarydevices.net/thesis-statement/) at the end of the [introduction](https://literarydevices.net/introduction/), three body paragraphs, and a [conclusion](https://literarydevices.net/conclusion/).

1） Describe the atmosphere of Tara’s house before her parents got divorced.

2) Describe Tara’s feelings when her mom moved out.

**HOW TO MARK A BOOK**¹

***Mortimer J. Adler***

You know you have to read "between the lines" to get the most out of anything. I want to persuade you to do something equally important in the course of your reading. I want to persuade you to "write between the lines." Unless you do, you are not likely to do the most efficient kind of reading.  
     I contend, quite bluntly, that marking up a book is not an act of mutilation but of love.  
     You shouldn't mark up a book which isn't yours. Librarians (or your friends) who lend you books expect you to keep them clean, and you should. If you decide that I am right about the usefulness of marking books, you will have to buy them. Most of the world's great books are available today, in reprint editions, at less than a dollar.  
     There are two ways in which one can own a book. The first is the property right you establish by paying for it, just as you pay for clothes and furniture. But this act of purchase is only the prelude to possession. Full ownership comes only when you have made it a part of yourself, and the best way to make yourself a part of it is by writing in it. An illustration may make the point clear. You buy a beefsteak and transfer it from the butcher's icebox to your own. But you do not own the beefsteak in the most important sense until you consume it and get it into your bloodstream. I am arguing that books, too, must be absorbed in your bloodstream to do you any good.  
    Confusion about what it means to *own* a book leads people to a false reverence for paper, binding, and type—a respect for the physical thing—the craft of the printer rather than the genius of the author. They forget that it is possible for a man to acquire the idea, to possess the beauty, which a great book contains, without staking his claim by pasting his bookplate inside the cover. Having a fine library doesn't prove that its owner has a mind enriched by books; it proves nothing more than that he, his father, or his wife, was rich enough to buy them.  
     There are three kinds of book owners. The first has all the standard sets and best-sellers—unread, untouched. (This deluded individual owns wood-pulp and ink, not books.) The second has a great many books—a few of them read through, most of them dipped into, but all of them as clean and shiny as the day they were bought. (This person would probably like to make books his own, but is restrained by a false respect for their physical appearance.) The third has a few books or many—every one of them dog-eared and dilapidated, shaken and loosened by continual use, marked and scribbled in from front to back. (This man owns books.)  
     Is it false respect, you may ask, to preserve intact and unblemished a beautifully printed book, an elegantly bound edition? Of course not. I'd no more scribble all over a first edition of "Paradise Lost" than I'd give my baby a set of crayons and an original Rembrandt! I wouldn't mark up a painting or a statue. Its soul, so to speak, is inseparable from its body. And the beauty of a rare edition or of a richly manufactured volume is like that of a painting or a statue.  
     But the soul of a book *can* be separated from its body. A book is more like the score of a piece of music than it is like a painting. No great musician confuses a symphony with the printed sheets of music. Arturo Toscanini reveres Brahms, but Toscanini's score of the C-minor Symphony is so thoroughly marked up that no one but the maestro himself can read it. The reason why a great conductor makes notations on his musical scores—marks them up again and again each time he returns to study them—is the reason why you should mark your books. If your respect for magnificent binding or typography gets in the way, buy yourself a cheap edition and pay your respects to the author.  
     Why is marking up a book indispensable to reading? First, it keeps you awake. (And I don't mean merely conscious; I mean wide awake.) In the second place, reading, if it is active, is thinking, and thinking tends to express itself in words, spoken or written. The marked book is usually the thought-through book. Finally, writing helps you remember the thoughts you had, or the thoughts the author expressed. Let me develop these three points.  
     If reading is to accomplish anything more than passing time, it must be active. You can't let your eyes glide across the lines of a book and come up with an understanding of what you have read. Now an ordinary piece of light fiction, like, say, "Gone with the Wind," doesn't require the most active kind of reading. The books you read for pleasure can be read in a state of relaxation, and nothing is lost. But a great book, rich in ideas and beauty, a book that raises and tries to answer great fundamental questions, demands the most active reading of which you are capable. You don't absorb the ideas of John Dewey the way you absorb the crooning of Mr. Vallee. You have to reach for them. That you cannot do while you're asleep.  
  If, when you've finished reading a book, the pages are filled with your notes, you know that you read actively. The most famous *active* reader of great books I know is President Hutchins, of the University of Chicago. He also has the hardest schedule of business activities of any man I know. He invariably reads with a pencil, and sometimes, when he picks up a book and pencil in the evening, he finds himself, instead of making intelligent notes, drawing what he calls "caviar factories" on the margins. When that happens, he puts the book down. He knows he's too tired to read, and he's just wasting time.  
     But, you may ask, why is writing necessary? Well, the physical act of writing, with your own hand, brings words and sentences more sharply before your mind and preserves them better in your memory. To set down your reaction to important words and sentences you have read, and the questions they have raised in your mind, is to preserve those reactions and sharpen those questions.  
     Even if you wrote on a scratch pad, and threw the paper away when you had finished writing, your grasp of the book would be surer. But you don't have to throw the paper away. The margins (top and bottom, as well as side), the end-papers, the very space between the lines, are all available. They aren't sacred. And, best of all, your marks and notes become an integral part of the book and stay there forever. You can pick up the book the following week or year, and there are all your points of agreement, disagreement, doubt, and inquiry. It's like resuming an interrupted conversation with the advantage of being able to pick up where you left off.  
     And that is exactly what reading a book should be: a conversation between you and the author. Presumably he knows more about the subject than you do; naturally, you'll have the proper humility as you approach him. But don't let anybody tell you that a reader is supposed to be solely on the receiving end. Understanding is a two-way operation; learning doesn't consist in being an empty receptacle. The learner has to question himself and question the teacher. He even has to argue with the teacher, once he understands what the teacher is saying. And marking a book is literally an expression of your differences, or agreements of opinion, with the author.  
    There are all kinds of devices for marking a book intelligently and fruitfully. Here's the way I do it:  
     . *Underlining*: of major points, of important or forceful statements.  
     2. *Vertical lines at the margin*: to emphasize a statement already underlined.  
    3. *Star, asterisk, or other doo-dad at the margin*: to be used sparingly, to emphasize the ten or twenty most important statements in the book. (You may want to fold the bottom corner of each page on which you use such marks. It won't hurt the sturdy paper on which most modern books are printed, and you will be able to take the book off the shelf at any time and, by opening it at the folded-corner page, refresh your recollection of the book.)  
     .*Numbers in the margin*: to indicate the sequence of points the author makes in developing a single argument.  
     5. *Numbers of other pages in the margin*: to indicate where else in the book the author made points relevant to the point marked; to tie up the ideas in a book, which, though they may be separated by many pages, belong together.  
     6. *Circling of key words or phrases.*  
     7. *Writing in the margin, or at the top or bottom of the page, for the sake of*: recording questions (and perhaps answers) which a passage raised in your mind; reducing a complicated discussion to a simple statement; recording the sequence of major points right through the books. I use the end-papers at the back of the book to make a personal index of the author's points in the order of their appearance.  
     The front end-papers are, to me, the most important. Some people reserve them for a fancy bookplate. I reserve them for fancy thinking. After I have finished reading the book and making my personal index on the back end-papers, I turn to the front and try to outline the book, not page by page, or point by point (I've already done that at the back), but as an integrated structure, with a basic unity and an order of parts. This outline is, to me, the measure of my understanding of the work.  
    If you're a die-hard anti-book-marker, you may object that the margins, the space between the lines, and the end-papers don't give you room enough. All right. How about using a scratch pad slightly smaller than the page-size of the book—so that the edges of the sheets won't protrude? Make your index, outlines, and even your notes on the pad, and then insert these sheets permanently inside the front and back covers of the book.  
     Or, you may say that this business of marking books is going to slow up your reading. It probably will. That's one of the reasons for doing it. Most of us have been taken in by the notion that speed of reading is a measure of our intelligence. There is no such thing as the right speed for intelligent reading. Some things should be read quickly and effortlessly, and some should be read slowly and even laboriously. The sign of intelligence in reading is the ability to read different things differently according to their worth. In the case of good books, the point is not to see how many of them you can get through, but rather how many can get through you—how many you can make your own. A few friends are better than a thousand acquaintances. If this be your aim, as it should be, you will not be impatient if it takes more time and effort to read a great book than it does a newspaper.  
     You may have one final objection to marking books. You can't lend them to your friends because nobody else can read them without being distracted by your notes. Furthermore, you won't want to lend them because a marked copy is a kind of intellectual diary, and lending it is almost like giving your mind away.  
     If your friend wishes to read your "Plutarch's Lives," "Shakespeare," or "The Federalist Papers," tell him gently but firmly, to buy a copy. You will lend him your car or your coat—but your books are as much a part of you as your head or your heart.

¹From *The Saturday Review of Literature*, July 6, 1941. By permission of the author.

**II. Summary**

A summary will be scored on how well you:

1. Identify and discuss the characters, conflict, and setting; retell the important events of the plot (complications, climax, and resolution) in your own words, except for quotations; and express the underlying meaning (theme) of the story;

2. Read, think about, and understand the text. Review the story to make sure you know it well. Use a dictionary or context clues to figure out the meaning of any important words that you don’t know.

3. Take notes. Write down the important events as they occur in the story.

4. Write an introduction. State the title and author of the story. Briefly describe the setting, characters, and conflict.

5. Write the body paragraphs. Retell the story in your own words. Describe the most important events from the story including the climax and resolution. The number of body paragraphs you have will depend on the length of the piece.

6. Write a conclusion. Describe how the conflict is resolved. Explain the theme (underlying meaning of the story). What comment is the author making about humankind or society?

7. Revise. Have you indented all paragraphs? Have you captured the main idea of the story? Have you included the most important details? Is there sentence variety? Have you avoided writing short, choppy sentences? Are there transitional words and phrases to connect ideas?

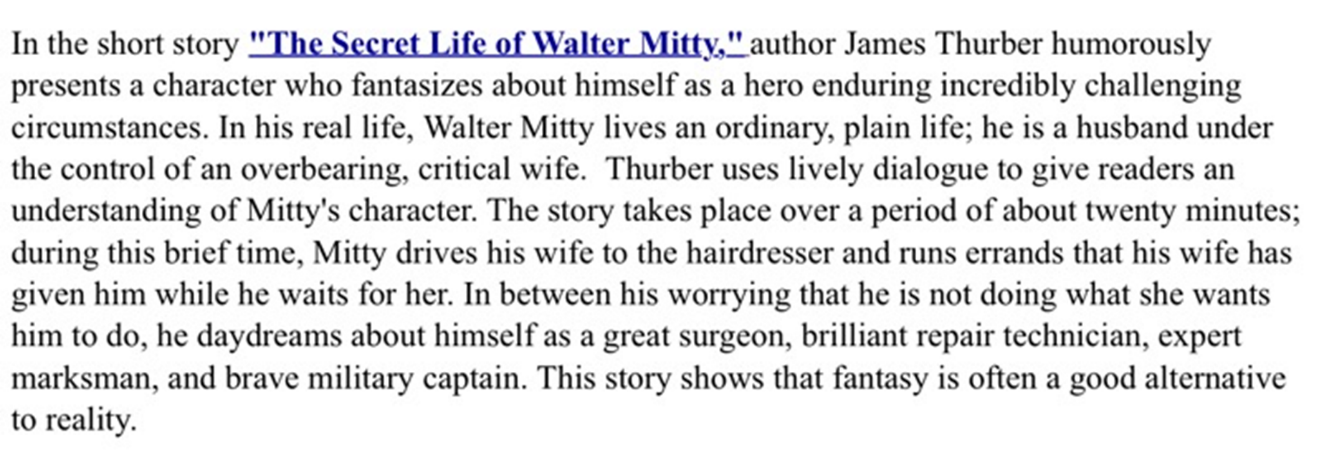
8. Proofread and edit. Check your spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Is the verb tense consistent? Are all names spelled correctly and capitalized? Have you avoided writing run-on sentences and sentence fragments?

9. Write your draft. Use blue or black ink. Skip lines. Write on one side of the paper only. Include a title on the top line.

10. Read your summary one last time before you turn it in. Look for careless spelling, punctuation, and grammar errors, especially omitted words or letters. Cross out errors neatly with a single line and write the correction above.

Examples:

1.



2.

**“The Flowers”** is a short story by ***Alice Walker*** that contains more than one plot line. In the first plot line, the character, Myop, is enjoying the natural surroundings as she explores the areas surrounding her family’s sharecropper cabin. The setting and tone are light-hearted as she collects flowers and enjoys the warm sun. Towards the end of the story, the tone of the story shifts and becomes darker or more ominous. This begins the second plot line of Walker’s story. Shortly after the shift in tone, Myop is startled when she steps on an old skull that has separated from the skeleton. Myop notices that the skeleton is that of a large man, and as she sees the surrounding, she notices the “rotted remains of a noose.” In addition, she sees another piece of rope hanging from the limb of a nearby tree. The reader can infer that the deceased man was lynched many years ago based on the clues the author includes. At the end of the story, Myop lays down her flowers and it seems that “the summer was over.”

3.

Written by **F. Scott Fitzgerald** and published in 1925, *The Great Gatsby* is set during the Roaring Twenties, in 1922 and tells the story of one man's pursuit of the American Dream. The narrator, Nick Carraway, is an upper class American man who moves from the West to New York to try his luck as a bond trader. He meets an eccentric, exceptionally wealthy neighbor named Jay Gatsby, and becomes embroiled in Gatsby's plan to rekindle a lost love with a woman named Daisy Buchanan, who happens to be Nick's cousin. The protagonist, Jay Gatsby, is involved in illegal activities, including bootlegging, or selling liquor during prohibition, when liquor sales are illegal in the United States. He throws lavish parties and eventually meets and begins an affair with his beloved Daisy. Daisy's husband, Tom, is carrying on an affair with a garage owner's wife; a woman named Myrtle Wilson. Driving home from New York, Daisy strikes and kills Myrtle while driving Gatsby's car. She is unaware that she has killed her husband's mistress and leaves the scene of the crime. Myrtle's husband is despondent and tries to find his wife's killer. Daisy's husband, Tom, directs him to Gatsby's house, where he shoots and kills Gatsby, and then himself, thus resolving Daisy's affair.

4.

***The Secret Garden*** was written by American writer **Frances Hodgson Burnett**. This book tells a story of an Indian girl whose parents die of cholera, then she moves to England to live with her uncle .One day, Mary hears that there is a secret garden which is locked by her uncle for 10 years and nobody has entered that garden before. Because of her curiosity, she finds the key which is deeply buried in the ground and opens the door of the garden. Mary finds that his uncle has a paralytic son, but he shuts him in the house all day long. Mary takes her cousin into the garden. The power of nature lets her cousin stand up again. Finally, both Mary and her cousin regain their happiness.

**Part II**

**The Arrow of Time**

*K.C. Cole*

Introduction

Like the arrow of time, which is believed to be able to move only forward, entropy is a one-way journey towards doomed decay. Were it not for the workings of entropy we would be living an easier and more carefree life. To combat entropy, however, we have an ‘uphill fight’ ahead of us, as Cole tells us in the following essay.

Text

It was about two months ago when I realized that entropy was getting the better of me. On the same day my car broke down (again), my refrigerator conked out and I learned that I needed root-canal work in my right rear tooth. The windows in the bedroom were still leaking every time it rained and my son’s baby sitter was still failing to show up every time I really needed her. My hair was turning gray and my typewriter was wearing out. The house needed paint and I needed glasses. My son’s sneakers were developing holes and I was developing a deep sense of futility.

After all, what was the point of spending half of Saturday at the Laundromat if the clothes were dirty all over again the following Friday?

Disorder, alas, is the natural order of things in the universe. There is even a precise measure of the amount of disorder, called entropy. Unlike almost every other physical property (motion, gravity, energy), entropy does not work both ways. It can only increase. Once it’s created it can never be destroyed. The road to disorder is a one-way street.

Because of its unnerving irreversibility, entropy has been called the arrow of time. We all understand this instinctively. Children’s rooms, left on their own, tend to get messy, not neat. Wood rots, metal rusts, people wrinkle and flowers wither. Even mountains wear down; even the nuclei of atoms decay. In the city we see entropy in the rundown subways and worn-out sidewalks and torn-down buildings, in the increasing disorder of our lives. We know, without asking, what is old. If we were suddenly to see the paint jump back on an old building, we would know that something was wrong. If we saw an egg unscramble itself and jump back into its shell, we would laugh in the same way we laugh at a movie run backward.

Entropy is no laughing matter, however, because with every increase in entropy energy is wasted and opportunity is lost. Water flowing down a mountainside can be made to do some useful work on its way. But once all the water is at the same level it can work no more. That is entropy. When my refrigerator was working, it kept all the cold air ordered in one part of the kitchen and warmer air in another. Once it broke down the warm and cold mixed into a lukewarm mess that allowed my butter to melt, my milk to rot and my frozen vegetables to decay.

Of course the energy is not really lost, but it has diffused and dissipated into a chaotic caldron of randomness that can do us no possible good. Entropy is chaos. It is loss of purpose.

People are often upset by the entropy they seem to see in the haphazardness of their own lives. Buffeted about like so many molecules in my tepid kitchen, they feel that they have lost their sense of direction, that they are wasting youth and opportunity at every turn. It is easy to see entropy in marriages, when the partners are too preoccupied to patch small things up, almost guaranteeing that they will fall apart. There is much entropy in the state of our country, in the relationships between nations—lost opportunities to stop the avalanche of disorders that seems ready to swallow us all.

Entropy is not inevitable everywhere, however. Crystals and snowflakes and galaxies are islands of incredibly ordered beauty in the midst of random events. If it was not for exceptions to entropy, the sky would be black and we would be able to see where the stars spend their days; it is only because air molecules in the atmosphere cluster in ordered groups that the sky is blue.

The most profound exception to entropy is the creation of life. A seed soaks up some soil and some carbon and some sunshine and some water and arranges it into a rose. A seed in the womb takes some oxygen and pizza and milk and transforms it into a baby.

The catch is that it takes a lot of energy to produce a baby. It also takes energy to make a tree. The road to disorder is all downhill but the road to creation takes work. Though combating entropy is possible, it also has its price. That’s why it seems so hard to get ourselves together, so easy to let ourselves fall apart.

Worse, creating order in one corner of the universe always creates more disorder somewhere else. We create ordered energy from oil and coal at the price of the entropy of smog.

I recently took up playing the flute again after an absence of several months. As the uneven vibrations screeched through the house, my son covered his ears and said, “Mom, what’s wrong with your flute?” Nothing was wrong with my flute, of course. It was my ability to play it that had atrophied, or entropied, as the case may be. The only way to stop that process was to practice every day, and sure enough my tone improved, though only at the price of constant work. Like anything else, abilities deteriorate when we stop applying our energies to them.

That’s why entropy is depressing. It seems as if just breaking even is an uphill fight. There’s a good reason that this should be so. The mechanics of entropy are a matter of chance. Take any ice-cold air molecule milling around my kitchen. The chances that it will wander in the direction of my refrigerator at any point are exactly 50-50. The chances that it will wander away from my refrigerator are also 50-50. But take billions of warm and cold molecules mixed together, and the chances that all the cold ones will wander toward the refrigerator and all the warm ones will wander away from it are virtually nil.

Entropy wins not because order is impossible but because there are always so many more paths toward disorder than toward order. There are so many more different ways to do a sloppy job than a good one, so many more ways to make a mess than to clean it up. The obstacles and accidents in our lives almost guarantee that constant collisions will bounce us on to random paths, get us off the track. Disorder is the path of least resistance, the easy but not the inevitable road.

Like so many others, I am distressed by the entropy I see around me today. I am afraid of the randomness of international events, of the lack of common purpose in the world; I am terrified that it will lead into the ultimate entropy of nuclear war. I am upset that I could not in the city where I live send my child to a public school; that people are unemployed and inflation is out of control ; that tensions between sexes and races seem to be increasing again; that relationships everywhere seem to be falling apart.

Social institutions—like atoms and stars—decay if energy is not added to keep them ordered. Friendships and families and economies all fall apart unless we constantly make an effort to keep them working and well oiled . And far too few people, it seems to me, are willing to contribute consistently to those efforts.

Of course, the more complex things are, the harder it is. If there were only a dozen or so air molecules in my kitchen, it would be likely—if I waited a year or so—that at some point the six coldest ones would congregate inside the freezer. But the more factors in the equation—the more players in the game— the less likely it is that their paths will coincide in an orderly way. The more pieces in the puzzle, the harder it is to put back together once order is disturbed. “Irreversibility,” said a physicist, “is the price we pay for complexity.”

**Exercises**

**1. Figure out what Entropy means in different disciplines and in the text.**

You may use a dictionary, an encyclopedia, or the Internet to get the different meanings of the word.

**A. Entropy in thermodynamics means that**

**B. Entropy in statistics means that**

**C. Entropy in life science means that**

**D. Entropy in our text means that**

**2. Figure out examples in our text to explain entropy clearly.**

**A. Entropy is irreversible.**

**Read Paragraph 4 carefully and figure out specific examples.**

**Examples:**

**B. Entropy is not inevitable everywhere, however.**

**Read Paragraph 8 carefully and figure out examples.**

**Examples:**

**3. Understand metaphors.**

**a. Read Paragraph 3 and tell why entropy is a one-way street.**

Originally speaking, a one-way street is

Here, it is used to suggest that

**b. Read Paragraphs 11-13 and tell us why disorder is downhill and combating entropy is an uphill fight.**

Originally, downhill refers to the fact that

, while uphill means that .

When disorder is compared to something downhill, it emphasizes that

.

The author says that combating entropy is an uphill fight because

.

**What Is an Idea?**

Wayne Booth & Marshall Gregory

An idea is always capable of yielding more than one argument or position. An idea never has a fixed, once-and-for-all meaning, and it always requires interpretation and discussion. Whenever interpretation is required and discussion permitted, disagreements will exist. Ideas are always to some degree controversial but the kind of controversy produced by the clash of ideas—unlike the kind of controversy produced by the clash of prejudices—is one in which reasons are offered and tested by both sides in the debate. As reasons are considered, positions that seemed fixed turn into ideas that move with argument.

A liberal education is an education in ideas—not merely memorizing them, but learning to move among them, balancing one against the other, negotiating relationships, accommodating new arguments, and returning for a closer look. Writing is one the primary ways of learning how to perform this intricate dance on one’s own. In American education, where the learning of facts and data is often confused with an education in ideas, thoughtful writing remains one of our best methods for learning how to turn opinions into ideas.

The attempt to write well forces us to clarify our thoughts. Because every word in an essay (unlike those in a conversation) can be retrieved in the same form every time, and then discussed, interpreted, challenged, and argued about, the act of putting words down on paper is more deliberate than speaking. It places more responsibility on us and it threatens us with greater consequences for error. Our written words and ideas can be thrown back in our faces, either by our readers or simply by the page itself as we re-read. We are thus more aware when writing than when speaking that every word is a choice, and that it commits us to a meaning in a way that another word would not.

Inexperienced writers often make the mistake of thinking that they have a firmer grasp on their ideas than on their words. They frequently utter the complaint, ”I know what I want to say, I just can’t find the words for it.” This claim is almost always untrue, not because beginning writers are deliberate liars, but because they confused their intuitive sense that they have *something* to say with the false sense that they already know precisely what that something is. When a writer is stuck for words, the problem is rarely a problem only of words. Inexperienced writers may think they need larger vocabularies when what they really need are clearer ideas and intentions. Being stuck for words indicates that the thought one wants to convey is still vague, unformed, cloudy, and confused. Once you finally discover your concrete meaning you will discover the proper words for expressing it at the same time. You may revise words later as meanings become clearer to you, but no writer ever stands in full possession of an idea without having enough words to express it.

Ideas are to writing as strength and agility are to athletic prowess: They do not themselves guarantee quality, but they are the muscle in all good writing prowess. Not all strong and agile athletes are champions, but all champion athletes are strong and agile. Not everyone who has powerful ideas is a great writer, but it is impossible for any writer even to achieve effectiveness, much less greatness, without them.

**Definition of a Football Fan**

*Brian*

Not every person who likes football falls into the category of a football fan. The word “fan” is an abbreviation of “fanatic”, meaning “an insane or crazy person.” In the case of football fans, the term is appropriate. They behave insanely; they are insane about the past, and they are insanely loyal.

Football fans wear their official team T-shirts and warm-up jackets to the mall, the supermarket, the classroom, and even—if they can get away with it—to work. If the team offers a giveaway item, the fans rush to the stadium to claim the hat or sports bag or water bottle that is being handed out that day. Baseball fans go similarly nuts when their favorite teams give away some attractive freebie. Football fans just plain behave insanely. Even the fact that fans spend the coldest months of the year huddling on icy metal benches in places like Chicago proves it. In addition, football fans decorate their houses with football-related items of every kind. To them, team bumper stickers belong not only on car bumpers, but also on fireplace mantels and front doors. When they go to a game, which they do as often as possible, they also decorate their bodies. True football fans not only put on their team jackets and grab their pennants but also paint their heads to look like helmets or wear glow-in-the-dark cheeseheads. At the game, these fans devote enormous energy to trying to get a “wave” going.

Football fans are insanely fascinated by the past. They talk about William “Refrigerator” Perry’s 1985 Super Bowl touchdown as though it had happened last week. They describe the “Fog Bowl” as if dense fog had blanketed yesterday’s game, not 1988’s playoff match between the Philadelphia Eagles and the Chicago Bears. They excitedly discuss John Elway’s final game before retiring—when he won the 1999 Super Bowl and received MVP honors—as if it were current news. And if a person can’t manage to get excited about such ancient history, he or she is looked at as just insane.

Last of all, football fans are insanely loyal to the team of their choice, often dangerously so. Should their beloved team lose three in a row, fans may begin to react negatively as a way to hide their broken hearts. They still obsessively watch each game and spend the entire day afterward reading and listening to the postgame commentary in newspapers, on TV sports segments, and on sports radio. Further, this intense loyalty makes fans dangerous. To anyone who dares to say to a loyal fan that another team has better players or coaches or, God forbid, to anyone wandering near the home cheering section wearing the jacket of the opposing team, physical damage is a real possibility. Bloody noses, black eyes, and broken bones are just some of the injuries inflicted on people cheering the wrong team when fans are around. In 1997, one man suffered a concussion at a game in Philadelphia when Eagles fans beat him up for wearing a jacket with another team’s insignia.

From February to August, football fans act like any other human beings. They pay their taxes, take out the garbage, and complain about the high cost of living. But when September rolls around, the colors and radios go on, the record books come off the shelves, and the devotion returns. For the true football fan, another season of insanity has begun.

**Read Brian’s article and then answer the following questions.**

1. What is major feature of a football fan?

2. Brian describes football fans from three perspectives. What are they respectively?

3. How does he make football fans vivid and interesting?

Writing exercises

* Summarize it in a short paragraph.

Definition

How to Write an Extended Definition

The first consideration is that a word doesn’t have one “right” meaning. There are more ideas or concepts than there are words, so the same word has to mean different things at different times. Conversely, different words or phrases can be used to name the same concept. What is necessary for clear thinking is that the parties to the conversation know what concept they are dealing with at any time.

So a definition is partly fact (“This is what this word means when military historians, or beekeepers, use it.”) and partly reasoned opinion ("Let's agree, for now, to use this word in this way so we can understand each other and come to agreement on other things."

An extended definition can be built outward from a logical definition, also known as a dictionary definition, or a notional definition, or an Aristotelian definition.

There are a few cautions to observe in putting together your logical definition.

Don’t create a circular definition—don’t, that is, define a word in terms of itself, as in “Patriotism is the quality of being a patriot.”

And definition by metaphor is not a logical definition, though it can have its uses: “Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel” can convey something true, but it does’nt do the work of a definition, which is to tell us what patriotism is.

1) Make sure you are clear about the use or the purpose of the definition.

2) Develop your definition by comparison and contrast, and develop the contrasts by examples. (Sometimes you need many examples; more often you can do better with one or two well-chosen examples if you accompany them with explanations why one example belongs inside the concept you are defining, and another on the outside.

3) Make the concept clearer by listing and describing its parts, or its subtypes, or its phases of development.

1） Write a definition of *a good student here in Peking University*or *true friendship* within 150 words, focusing on one major feature. (an exercise of a working definition)

2） Or you can choose to define any term in your own way, focusing on details. (an exercise of an extended definition)

a.      job burnout

b.    body shame

c.  team building

    3) Or you can clarify one term as compared with another term which sounds similar but actually different.

       a. epidemic (pandemic)

       b. intranet (internet)

**Part III**

**Two Weddings**

*Ricki Heller*

**Introduction**

What makes a good wedding ceremony? Should it be gorgeous and expensive to mark the occasion? Two distinct wedding ceremonies are described in the following article to show that, with all the differences, an impressive wedding ceremony is always an occasion of love, merriment and friendship.

**Text**

Last summer, it seemed as if everyone I knew decided to get married at once. After attending six weddings (and being a bridesmaid at three of them), I now consider myself a “wedding expert.” Of all the weddings I attended, two stand out most in my mind: Carla’s and Bob’s. Their weddings differed in almost every way, yet despite all the differences, I realized that these two celebrations shared one very important trait.

Carla wanted a traditional June wedding, and that’s exactly what she planned. The ceremony took place on a perfectly sunny summer day, on the fairy-tale grounds of a historic inn. Over 200 chairs were placed in parallel rows on the well-tended grass, with a red carpet laid down the middle aisle. In front of the seats, decorated with flowing arrangements of white roses, tulips and orchids, was a white decorative shelter built just for the occasion. Beneath it, Carla, John (the groom), and the minister stood while the couple exchanged traditional vows.

After the ceremony, the guests were invited to be seated in the lavish dining room, arranged on the terrace under a massive tent. Inside, the linen-covered tables were adorned with more flowers, candles, fine china and crystal. The atmosphere was so formal, in fact, we forgot we were actually outdoors! As we dined, we were able to peer out at the rich green lawns and foliage around the inn. The atmosphere was truly magical.

Bob’s wedding on the other hand, was completely unconventional. The location, like Carla’s, was outdoors—but in this case, “outdoors” meant a provincial park! The ceremony took place at a campground where guests were invited to camp overnight. With the forest and sounds of wildlife surrounding us, we sat cross-legged on the grass or perched on rocks and hillocks overseeing the ceremony, which took place in a small clearing between the tents and communal washrooms. The minister, too, was camping overnight, and brought along her dog, a golden retriever that barked through most of the ceremony. About half way through the vows, (which, of course, Bob and Karen had written themselves), it began to drizzle, and guests were quickly enlisted to shield the bride and groom with oversized umbrellas, creating a human shelter over the couple.

Clothing was another feature that distinguished the two weddings. At Carla’s, it was “formal attire only.” We bridesmaids were fitted for custom-made dresses, sophisticated satin gowns in “seafoam green.” Even our silk pumps were professionally dyed to match the dress colour perfectly. When Carla walked down the aisle, she could have been modeling for *Brides* magazine. Here designer gown, flowing in silk and tulle, was beaded all over the bodice with tiny, sparkling pearls and sequins. John’s tuxedo mated perfectly, with a cummerbund and bow tie in cream-coloured satin.

The dress code at Bod’s wedding, in contrast, was decidedly more relaxed. Nevertheless, there was also a unique style to the clothing at this wedding. Guests were cautioned to wear something “comfortable,” since we’d be erecting tents, setting our food, or, as it turned out, holding umbrellas! Most people arrived in shorts and T-shirts. The bride and groom ingeniously managed to be equally casual. At first, Karen breezed in wearing a loose, flowing Laura Ashley frock, a light cotton print of tiny mauve and white flowers. Bob as always the nonconformist, wore black cotton slacks and a T-shirt painted to look like a shirt and tie. Even the minister wore shorts and a T-shirt under her robes, and her dog sported a Karen pulled off the dress to reveal a tank top and shorts, and Bob exchanged his slacks for cut-off shorts.

The meal itself was another memorable aspect of the two weddings. Carla’s dinner, a six-course affair, started with avocado, and shrimp soup, followed by caviar and hearts of palm salad, a main course of salmon Wellington and dessert of chocolate mousse and cherries jubilee. Guests were offered champagne cocktails before dinner and a choice of wines throughout the meal. Between courses, waiters brought “palate cleansers” of lemon and mint sorbet.

On the other hand, the fare at Bob’s wedding offered no surprise, since guests themselves and prepared it. At this pot luck wedding, everyone brought a dish to the campsite, where the food was arranged on serving dishes on a picnic table. Guests then descended, paperplates and plastic cutlery in hand, to help themselves from the communal buffet. Chewing on salads, quiches and pastas, guests mingled and chatted as we ate. Someone even brought a case of homemade wine, its label boasting, “Karen and Bod: 2001.”

Although they were very different in their approach and individual details, my two friends’ weddings shared some important features. Each one offered a great party: Carla’s live band played on into the wee hours of the morning, when people decided to kick off their shoes and keep dancing. At Bob and Karen’s wedding, we danced outdoors, lanterns flickering and the portable CD players at maximum volume, keeping the raccoons and bears at bay as we danced. In the end both weddings seemed to overflow with love, friendship and feelings of joy for the happy couples; in that respect, they were exactly the same.

**Exercises**

**1. Signal words suggesting Contrast**

*In the text, certain words or set phrases are used to suggest contrast. Read the groups of sentences and underline the words or phrases that relate each group of sentences and tell the issue in contrast.*

1) Carla wanted a traditional June wedding, and that’s exactly what she planned.

Bob’s wedding on the other hand, was completely unconventional.

**Contrast:**

2) The ceremony took place on a perfectly sunny summer day, on the fairy-tale grounds of a historic inn.

The location, like Carla’s, was outdoors—but in this case, “outdoors” meant a provincial park!

**Contrast:**

3) Clothing was another feature that distinguished the two weddings. At Carla’s, it was “formal attire only.”

The dress code at Bob’s wedding, in contrast, was decidedly more relaxed.

**Contrast:**

4) Carla’s dinner, a six-course affair, started with avocado, and shrimp soup, followed by caviar and hearts of palm salad, a main course of salmon Wellington and dessert of chocolate mousse and cherries jubilee. Guests were offered champagne cocktails before dinner and a choice of wines throughout the meal. Between courses, waiters brought “palate cleansers” of lemon and mint sorbet.

On the other hand, the fare at Bob’s wedding offered no surprises, since the guests themselves had prepared it.

**Contrast:**

**2. Differences and Similarities**

1) Differences

Complete the following table and find out the differences between the two weddings.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Carla’s Wedding** | **Bob’s Wedding** |
| the type of the wedding |  |  |
| location |  |  |
| arrangements |  |  |
| dress code |  |  |
| food |  |  |
| vows taken at the ceremony |  |  |
| atmosphere |  |  |

2) Similarities

*Answer the following questions and find out the similarities between the two weddings.*

A. What did the guests do to entertain themselves?

B. What was most important for a wedding?

**Text**

**A Vote for McDonald’s**

*Jesse*

For my birthday this month, my wife has offered to treat me to dinner at the restaurant of my choice. I think she expects me to ask for a meal at the Chalet, the classiest, most expensive restaurant in town. However, I’m going to eat my birthday dinner of McDonald’s. When I compare the two restaurants, life advantages of eating at McDonald’s are clear.

For one thing, going to the Chalet is more difficult than going to McDonald’s. the Chalet has a jacket-and-tie rule, which means I have to dig a sport coat and tie out of the back of my closet, make sure they’re semiclean, and try to steam out the wrinkles somehow. The Chalet also requires reservations. Since it is downtown, I have to leave an hour early to give myself time to find a parking space within six blocks of the restaurant. The Chalet cancels reservations if a party is more than ten minutes late. Going to McDonald’s, on the other hand, is easy. I can feel comfortable wearing my jeans or warm-up suit. I don’t have to do any advance planning. I can leave my house whenever I’m ready and pull into a doorside parking space within fifteen minutes.

The Chalet is a dimly lit, formal place. While I am struggling to see what’s on my plate, I worry that I’ll knock one of the fragile glasses off the table. The waiters at the Chalet can be uncomfortably formal, too. As I awkwardly pronounce the French words on the menu, I get the feeling that I don’t quite live up to their standards. Even the other diners can make me feel uncomfortable. And thought the food at the Chalet is gourmet, I prefer simpler meals. I don’t like unfamiliar food swimming in a pasty white sauce. Eating at the Chalet is, to me, less enjoyable than eating at McDonald’s. McDonald’s is a pleasant place where I feel at ease. It is well lit, and the brightcolored décor is informal. The employees serve with a smile, and the food is easy to pronounce and identify. I know what I ‘m going to get when I order a certain type of sandwich.

The most important difference between the Chalet and McDonald’s, though, is price. Dinner for two at the Chalet, even without appetizers or desserts, would easily cost $100. And the $100 doesn’t include the cost of parking the car and tipping the waiter, which can come to an additional $20. Once, I forgot to bring enough money. At McDonald’s, a filling meal for tow will cost around $10. With the extra $110, my wife and I can eat at McDonald’s eleven more times, or go to the movies five times, or buy tickets to a football game.

So, for my birthday dinner, or any other time, I prefer to eat at McDonald’s. it is convenient, friendly, and cheap. And with the money my wife saves by taking me to McDonald’s, she can buy me what I really want for my birthday—a new Sears power saw.

**Side by side**

**Side A** Going to Chalet is more difficult while .

**Side B** Going to Chalet is while McDonald’s is to go to.

**Side C** The cost for eating at Chalet is while McDonald’s is .

**Point by Point**

**Change the second paragraph into *point by point* pattern.**

**Writing assignment**

Write a paragraph to compare or contrast the following issues:

1) Nuclear power & solar power: in what aspects are they similar to each other?

2) Renting & owning: how do they impact on one's behavior?

3) Reading a book & watching a movie: which one is more beneficial especially when it comes to the development of children's imagination?

4) High school & college: the goals of teaching compared

5) Scientific students & art students: how are they different in their mentality?

6) Online learning and class teaching: Which one is better?

7)Science and technology: are they different from each other?

8) The pen is mightier than the sword: how true is this?

9) Physical beauty & inner beauty: which one is more emphasized?

10) The influence of parents and the influences of peers: which is stronger?

**Part IV**

**Why We Travel (an excerpt)**

*Pico Iyer*

We travel, initially, to lose ourselves; and we travel, next, to find ourselves. We travel to open our hearts and eyes and learn more about the world than our newspapers will accommodate. We travel to bring what little we can, in our ignorance and knowledge, to those parts of the globe whose riches are differently dispersed. And we travel, in essence, to become young fools again — to slow time down and get taken in, and fall in love once more. The beauty of this whole process was best described, perhaps, before people even took to frequent flying, by George Santayana in his lapidary essay, “The Philosophy of Travel.” We “need sometimes,” the Harvard philosopher wrote, “to escape into open solitudes, into aimlessness, into the moral holiday of running some pure hazard, in order to sharpen the edge of life, to taste hardship, and to be compelled to work desperately for a moment at no matter what.”

I like that stress on work, since never more than on the road are we shown how proportional our blessings are to the difficulty that precedes them; and I like the stress on a holiday that’s “moral” since we fall into our ethical habits as easily as into our beds at night. Few of us ever forget the connection between “travel” and “travail,” and I know that I travel in large part in search of hardship — both my own, which I want to feel, and others’, which I need to see. Travel in that sense guides us toward a better balance of wisdom and compassion — of seeing the world clearly, and yet feeling it truly. For seeing without feeling can obviously be uncaring; while feeling without seeing can be blind.

Yet for me the first great joy of traveling is simply the luxury of leaving all my beliefs and certainties at home, and seeing everything I thought I knew in a different light, and from a crooked angle. In that regard, even a Kentucky Fried Chicken outlet (in Beijing) or a scratchy revival showing of “Wild Orchids” (on the Champs-Elysees) can be both novelty and revelation: In China, after all, people will pay a whole week’s wages to eat with Colonel Sanders, and in Paris, Mickey Rourke is regarded as the greatest actor since Jerry Lewis.

If a Mongolian restaurant seems exotic to us in Evanston, Ill., it only follows that a McDonald’s would seem equally exotic in Ulan Bator — or, at least, equally far from everything expected. Though it’s fashionable nowadays to draw a distinction between the “tourist” and the “traveler,” perhaps the real distinction lies between those who leave their assumptions at home, and those who don’t: Among those who don’t, a tourist is just someone who complains, “Nothing here is the way it is at home,” while a traveler is one who grumbles, “Everything here is the same as it is in Cairo — or Cuzco or Kathmandu.” It’s all very much the same.

But for the rest of us, the sovereign freedom of traveling comes from the fact that it whirls you around and turns you upside down, and stands everything you took for granted on its head. If a diploma can famously be a passport (to a journey through hard realism), a passport can be a diploma (for a crash course in cultural relativism). And the first lesson we learn on the road, whether we like it or not, is how provisional and provincial are the things we imagine to be universal. When you go to North Korea, for example, you really do feel as if you’ve landed on a different planet — and the North Koreans doubtless feel that they’re being visited by an extra-terrestrial, too (or else they simply assume that you, as they do, receive orders every morning from the Central Committee on what clothes to wear and what route to use when walking to work, and you, as they do, have loudspeakers in your bedroom broadcasting propaganda every morning at dawn, and you, as they do, have your radios fixed so as to receive only a single channel).

We travel, then, in part just to shake up our complacencies by seeing all the moral and political urgencies, the life-and-death dilemmas, that we seldom have to face at home. And we travel to fill in the gaps left by tomorrow’s headlines: When you drive down the streets of Port-au-Prince, for example, where there is almost no paving and women relieve themselves next to mountains of trash, your notions of the Internet and a “one world order” grow usefully revised. Travel is the best way we have of rescuing the humanity of places, and saving them from abstraction and ideology.

And in the process, we also get saved from abstraction ourselves, and come to see how much we can bring to the places we visit, and how much we can become a kind of carrier pigeon — an anti-Federal Express, if you like — in transporting back and forth what every culture needs. I find that I always take Michael Jordan posters to Kyoto, and bring woven ikebana baskets back to California; I invariably travel to Cuba with a suitcase piled high with bottles of Tylenol and bars of soap, and come back with one piled high with salsa tapes, and hopes, and letters to long-lost brothers.

…

By now all of us have heard (too often) the old Proust line about how the real voyage of discovery consists not in seeing new places but in seeing with new eyes. Yet one of the subtler beauties of travel is that it enables you to bring new eyes to the people you encounter. Thus even as holidays help you appreciate your own home more — not least by seeing it through a distant admirer’s eyes — they help you bring newly appreciative — distant — eyes to the places you visit. You can teach them what they have to celebrate as much as you celebrate what they have to teach. This, I think, is how tourism, which so obviously destroys cultures, can also resuscitate or revive them, how it has created new “traditional” dances in Bali, and caused craftsmen in India to pay new attention to their works. If the first thing we can bring the Cubans is a real and balanced sense of what contemporary America is like, the second — and perhaps more important — thing we can bring them is a fresh and renewed sense of how special are the warmth and beauty of their country, for those who can compare it with other places around the globe.

Thus travel spins us round in two ways at once: It shows us the sights and values and issues that we might ordinarily ignore; but it also, and more deeply, shows us all the parts of ourselves that might otherwise grow rusty. For in traveling to a truly foreign place, we inevitably travel to moods and states of mind and hidden inward passages that we’d otherwise seldom have cause to visit.

On the most basic level, when I’m in Thailand, though a teetotaler who usually goes to bed at 9 p.m., I stay up till dawn in the local bars; and in Tibet, though not a real Buddhist, I spend days on end in temples, listening to the chants of sutras. I go to Iceland to visit the lunar spaces within me, and, in the uncanny quietude and emptiness of that vast and treeless world, to tap parts of myself generally obscured by chatter and routine.

We travel, then, in search of both self and anonymity — and, of course, in finding the one we apprehend the other. Abroad, we are wonderfully free of caste and job and standing; we are, as Hazlitt puts it, just the “gentlemen in the parlour,” and people cannot put a name or tag to us. And precisely because we are clarified in this way, and freed of inessential labels, we have the opportunity to come into contact with more essential parts of ourselves (which may begin to explain why we may feel most alive when far from home).

Abroad is the place where we stay up late, follow impulse and find ourselves as wide open as when we are in love. We live without a past or future, for a moment at least, and are ourselves up for grabs and open to interpretation. We even may become mysterious — to others, at first, and sometimes to ourselves — and, as no less a dignitary than Oliver Cromwell once noted, “A man never goes so far as when he doesn’t know where he is going.”

There are, of course, great dangers to this, as to every kind of freedom, but the great promise of it is that, traveling, we are born again, and able to return at moments to a younger and a more open kind of self. Traveling is a way to reverse time, to a small extent, and make a day last a year — or at least 45 hours — and traveling is an easy way of surrounding ourselves, as in childhood, with what we cannot understand. Language facilitates this cracking open, for when we go to France, we often migrate to French, and the more childlike self, simple and polite, that speaking a foreign language educes. Even when I’m not speaking pidgin English in Hanoi, I’m simplified in a positive way, and concerned not with expressing myself, but simply making sense.

So travel, for many of us, is a quest for not just the unknown, but the unknowing; I, at least, travel in search of an innocent eye that can return me to a more innocent self. I tend to believe more abroad than I do at home (which, though treacherous again, can at least help me to extend my vision), and I tend to be more easily excited abroad, and even kinder. And since no one I meet can “place” me — no one can fix me in my risumi –I can remake myself for better, as well as, of course, for worse (if travel is notoriously a cradle for false identities, it can also, at its best, be a crucible for truer ones). In this way, travel can be a kind of monasticism on the move: On the road, we often live more simply (even when staying in a luxury hotel), with no more possessions than we can carry, and surrendering ourselves to chance.

This is what Camus meant when he said that “what gives value to travel is fear” — disruption, in other words, (or emancipation) from circumstance, and all the habits behind which we hide. And that is why many of us travel not in search of answers, but of better questions. I, like many people, tend to ask questions of the places I visit, and relish most the ones that ask the most searching questions back of me: In Paraguay, for example, where one car in every two is stolen, and two-thirds of the goods on sale are smuggled, I have to rethink my every Californian assumption. And in Thailand, where many young women give up their bodies in order to protect their families — to become better Buddhists — I have to question my own too-ready judgments. “The ideal travel book,” Christopher Isherwood once said, “should be perhaps a little like a crime story in which you’re in search of something.” And it’s the best kind of something, I would add, if it’s one that you can never quite find.

…

So, if more and more of us have to carry our sense of home inside us, we also — Emerson and Thoreau remind us — have to carry with us our sense of destination. The most valuable Pacifics we explore will always be the vast expanses within us, and the most important Northwest Crossings the thresholds we cross in the heart. The virtue of finding a gilded pavilion in Kyoto is that it allows you to take back a more lasting, private Golden Temple to your office in Rockefeller Center.

And even as the world seems to grow more exhausted, our travels do not, and some of the finest travel books in recent years have been those that undertake a parallel journey, matching the physical steps of a pilgrimage with the metaphysical steps of a questioning (as in Peter Matthiessen’s great “The Snow Leopard”), or chronicling a trip to the farthest reaches of human strangeness (as in Oliver Sack’s “Island of the Color-Blind,” which features a journey not just to a remote atoll in the Pacific, but to a realm where people actually see light differently). The most distant shores, we are constantly reminded, lie within the person asleep at our side.

So travel, at heart, is just a quick way to keeping our minds mobile and awake. As Santayana, the heir to Emerson and Thoreau with whom I began, wrote, “There is wisdom in turning as often as possible from the familiar to the unfamiliar; it keeps the mind nimble; it kills prejudice, and it fosters humor.” Romantic poets inaugurated an era of travel because they were the great apostles of open eyes. Buddhist monks are often vagabonds, in part because they believe in wakefulness. And if travel is like love, it is, in the end, mostly because it’s a heightened state of awareness, in which we are mindful, receptive, undimmed by familiarity and ready to be transformed. That is why the best trips, like the best love affairs, never really end.

**Why We Take Notes (an excerpt)**

**Clarissa White**

One reason you should take lecture notes is that lectures add to what you read in textbooks. Lectures combine the material and approaches of many texts, saving you the trouble of researching an entire field. They keep up to date with their subjects and can include the latest studies or discoveries in their presentations; they needn’t wait for the next edition of the book to come out. They can provide additional examples or simplify difficult concepts, making it easier for you to master tricky material. And the best lecturers combine knowledge with expert showmanship. Both informative and entertaining speakers, they can make any subject, for ancient civilizations to computers, leap vividly to life.

True, you say, but isn’t it good enough just to listen to these wonderful people without writing down what they say? Actually, it isn’t, which leads us to another reason for taking lecture notes. Studies have shown that after two weeks, you’ll forget 80 percent of it. And you didn’t come to the lecture room just to be entertained. You came to learn. The only way to keep the material in your head is to get it down in permanent form—in the form of lecture notes.

**Why Do Leaves Change Color in the Fall?**

*Warren G Phillips*

**Well, in fact, the leaves *don’t* change color!** Each year, throughout New England, Colorado, Wisconsin, and many northern areas of the country, autumn is a beautiful time to appreciate the wonders of Mother Nature. This year, the colors were especially breathtaking in New England due to a drought and some mild weather. But wait…do they really *change* colors? Here’s the science story behind this incredible phenomenon:

**It’s all about photosynthesis.** You see, leaves are “food factories”, and photosynthesis is the process of making and storing food. Chlorophyll is the green chemical that helps convert sunlight to food (sugars). In autumn, the tree prepares for winter by moving chemicals from the leaves to the branches and trunk, and eventually, down to the roots. This is signaled by shorter days and cooler nights. The chemicals include nitrogen compounds, potassium, and phosphorus. These moving chemicals cause the green chlorophyll in the leaves to decompose. Left behind are carotenes (yellow, orange, and brown) and anthocyanins (red and purple) that have been in the leaves all year, but weren’t seen because of all of the green chlorophyll. *So, you see, they don’t* ***change color, they just lose*** *the green chlorophyll, exposing the other pigments (carotenes and anthocyanins).*

**Weather is a factor, and some years are more colorful than others.** The fall weather conditions that produce the most vibrant colors are sunny days, followed by cool, dry nights. This is because leavesmanufacture sugars during the warm daylight hours, but the cool nights prevent the sugar from moving from the leaves. This helps to produce more anthocyanin ( the red pigment), resulting in more colorful leaves. This is why some trees will be very red on the sunny side of the tree, while the shadier side is yellower. Interestingly, frost is NOT required for autumn colors.

**The Benefits of Lying**

*Posted on*[*November 23, 2010*](http://jolamble.com/2010/11/23/the-benefits-of-lying/)*by*[*Jo Lamble*](http://jolamble.com/author/jo-lamble/)

Ask many people and they will tell you that the one thing they can’t tolerate is lying – not in their partner, not in their friends and not in their children. But what kind of world would it be if no one ever lied? The confidence of our children would be shattered. Friendships would be destroyed. Relationships would be put in jeopardy. Obviously it would be just as intolerable if all we ever did were to lie.

Many people disagree with me on this, but I believe that there are times when telling a white lie is kinder than telling the truth. Telling a friend that you love her new house is kinder than admitting you don’t. Raving about your child’s painting is kinder than admitting you didn’t recognise yourself in amongst all that colour. Complimenting your partner’s delivery of his mother’s eulogy is far kinder than admitting that no one could hear him in the church.

And what about the trickier situations? Admitting that you have a passing crush on a workmate could have a devastating effect on your relationship with your partner. Surely it’s better to keep that piece of truth to yourself (and not act on that crush). Telling a friend that you can’t stand their partner may affect your friendship. Surely it’s better to deny not liking him or her and just limit the contact you have with them as a couple to protect your friendship.

My rule of thumb is this. A white lie is a lie that if your friend, partner, parent or child found out about, they would understand why you told it. They would be able to see that you were trying to protect their feelings and protect your relationship with them. A dangerous lie is one we tell to protect ourselves, to stop anyone thinking badly of us. And if our friend, partner, parent or child found out that we had told such a lie, they would not understand. They would feel hurt and betrayed.

**Sum up the benefits of lying.**

**Writing Assignment**

**Refer to some academic articles and cite some data in your writing.**

**Causes：**

1. What is causing college students to feel greater anxiety?
2. What causes a family to have close relationships?
3. What causes some people to hurt doctors severely or even kill them?
4. Why do students tend to overwork?
5. Why do people enjoy the sight of fluffy animals?

**Effects:**

  1.What might be the negative consequences of overworking among students?

    2. What is the effect of family vacations on family relationships?

   3. effect of social media on young people

   4. What will happen to the ecosystem if mosquitoes disappear?

   5.  the impact of  paperless office  on environment (focus either on advantages or disadvantages; do not mingle them together)

**Part V**

**Friends, Good Friends and Such Good Friends**

1 Women are friends, I once would have said, when they totally love and support and trust each other, and bare to each other the secrets of their souls, and run— no questions asked to help each other, and tell harsh truths to each other when harsh truths must be told. Women are friends, I once would have said, when they share the same affection or same indignity for all the people you love and all the events you hate.

2 In other words, I once would have said that a friend is a friend all the way, but now I believe that's a narrow point of view. For the friendships I have and the friendships I see are conducted at many levels of intensity, serve many different functions, meet different needs and range from those as all-the-way as the friendship of the soul sisters mentioned above to that of the most casual playmates.

3 Consider these varieties of friendship:

4 Some friends are convenience friends. These are women with whom, if our paths weren't crossing all the time, we'd have no particular reason to be friends: a next-door neighbor, a woman in our car pool, the mother of one of our children's closest friends or maybe some mommy with whom we serve juice and cookies each week at the nursery in the neighborhood.

5 Convenience friends are convenient indeed. They'll lend us their cups and silverware for a party. They'll drive our kids to soccer when we're sick. They'll take us to pick up our car when we need a lift to the garage. They'll even take our cats when we go on vacation. As we will for them.

6 But we don't, with convenience friends, ever come too close or tell too much; we maintain our public face and emotional distance. "Which means," says Elaine, "that I'll talk about being overweight but not about being depressed. Which means I'll admit being mad but not blind with rage. Which means that I might say that we're short of cash this month but never that I'm worried sick over money."

7 But which doesn't mean that there isn't sufficient value to be found in these friendships of mutual aid, in convenience friends.

8 Some people share special interests. They are special-interest friends. These friendships aren't intimate, and they needn't involve kids or silverware or cats. Their value lies in some interest jointly shared. And so we may have an office friend or a tennis friend or a friend from an organization called Women’s Democratic Club.

9 "I've got one woman friend," says Joyce, "who likes, as I do, to take psychology courses. Which makes it nice for me—and nice for her. It's fun to go with someone you know and it's fun to discuss what you've learned, driving back from the classes." And for the most part, she says, that's all they discuss.

10 "I'd say that what we're doing is doing together, not being together," Suzanne says of her Tuesday-doubles friends. "It's mainly a tennis relationship, but we play together well. And I guess all we need to have is a couple of playmates."

11 I agree.

12 My playmate is a shopping friend, a woman of marvelous taste, a woman who knows exactly where to buy what. Furthermore, she is a woman who always knows beyond a doubt what one ought to be buying. I don’t have the time to keep up with what’s new in eye shadow, hemlines and shoes and whether the smock look is in or finished already. But since I care a lot about eye shadow, hemlines and shoes, and since I don’t want to wear smocks if the smock look is finished, I’m very glad to have a shopping friend.

13 There are friends who bring us back to our history. I tend to call them historical friends. We all have a friend who knew us when... maybe way back in Miss Meltzer's second grade, when our family lived in that three-room flat in Brooklyn, when our dad was out of work for seven months, when our brother Allie got in that fight where they had to call the police, when our sister married the dentist from Yonkers and when the day after we secretly engaged with our loved ones against our parents’ will, she was the first, the only, friend we told.

14 The years have gone by and we've gone separate ways and we've little in common now, but we're still an intimate part of each other's past. And so whenever we go to Detroit we always go to visit this friend of our girlhood. Who knows how we looked before our teeth were straightened. Who knows how we talked before we lost our Brooklyn accents. Who knows what we ate before we learned about artichokes. And who, by her presence, puts us in touch with an earlier part of ourselves, a part of ourselves which is important and is never to lose.

15 “What this friend means to me and what I mean to her,” says Grace, “is having a sister without sibling rivalry. We know the texture of each other’s lives. She remembers my grandmother’s cabbage soup. I remember the way her uncle played the piano. There’s simply no other friend who remembers those things.”

16Another type of friend can be called crossroads friends. Like historical friends, our crossroads friends are important for what was for the friendship we shared at a crucial, now past, time of life. A time, perhaps, when we roomed in college together; or worked as eager young singles in the Big City together; or went together, as my friend Elizabeth and I did, through pregnancy, birth and that scary first year of new motherhood.

17 Crossroads friends forge powerful links, links strong enough to endure with not much more contact than once-a-year letters at Christmas. And out of respect for those crossroads years, for those dramas and dreams we once shared, we will always be friends.

18Friendship can be maintained between people of different generations. It is the close relationship between what I term cross-generational friends. Historical friends and crossroads friends seem to maintain a special kind of intimacy— dormant but always ready to be revived –and though we may rarely meet, whenever we do connect, it's personal and intense. Another kind of intimacy exists in the friendships that form across generations in what one of my friends calls her daughter-mother and her mother-daughter relationships.

19 Evelyn's friend is her mother's age –"but I share so much more than I ever could with my mother" –a woman she talks to of music, of books and of life. "What I get from her is the benefit of her experience. What she gets—and enjoys— from me is youthful perspective. It's a pleasure for both of us."

20 I have in my own life a precious friend, a woman of 65 who has lived very hard, who is wise, who listens well; who has been where I am and can help me understand it; and who represents not only an ultimate ideal mother to me but also the person I'd like to be when I grow up.

21 In our daughter role we tend to do more than our share of self-revelation; in our mother role we tend to receive what’s revealed. It's another very lovely kind of friendship.

…

22 There are good friends, and pretty good friends, and very good friends indeed, and these friendships are defined by their level of intimacy. And what we'll reveal at each of these levels of intimacy is calibrated with care. We might tell a medium friend, for example, that yesterday we had a fight with our husband. And we might tell a pretty good friend that this fight with our husband made us so mad that we slept on the couch. And we might tell a very good friend that the reason we got so mad in that fight that we slept on the couch had something to do with that girl who works in his office. But it's only to our very best friends that we're willing to tell all, to tell what's going on with that girl in his office.

23 The best of friends, I still believe, totally love and support and trust each other, and bare to each other the secrets of their souls, and run—no questions asked— to help each other, and tell harsh truths to each other when they must be told.

24 But we needn't agree about everything (only 12-year-old girl friends agree about everything) to tolerate each other's point of view. To accept without judgment. To give and to take without ever keeping score. And to be there, as I am for them and as they are for me, to comfort our sorrows, to celebrate our joys.

**Exercises**

At the very beginning, the author classified women friends into several categories.

What are the different categories?

Why does she classify women friends in this way?

Towards the end of the article, how does the author classify women friends in another way?

What are the differences between the two kinds of classifications?

**Three Ways of Meeting Oppression**

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Oppressed people deal with their oppression in three characteristic ways. One way is acquiescence: the oppressed resign themselves to their doom. They tacitly adjust themselves to oppression, and thereby become conditioned to it. In every movement toward freedom some of the oppressed prefer to remain oppressed. Almost 2800 years ago Moses set out to lead the children of Israel from the slavery of Egypt to the freedom of the promised land. He soon discovered that slaves do not always welcome their deliverers. They become accustomed to being slaves. They would rather bear those ills they have, as Shakespeare pointed out, than flee to others that they know not of. They prefer the “fleshpots of Egypt” to the ordeals of emancipation.

There is such a thing as the freedom of exhaustion. Some people are so worn down by the yoke of oppression that they give up. A few years ago in the slum areas of Atlanta, a Negro guitarist used to sing almost daily: “Been down so long that down don’t bother me.” This is the type of negative freedom and resignation that often engulfs the life of the oppressed.

But this is not the way out. To accept passively an unjust system is to cooperate with that system; thereby the oppressed become as evil as the oppressor. Non-cooperation with evil is as much a moral obligation as is cooperation with good. The oppressed must never allow the conscience of the oppressor to slumber. Religion reminds every man that he is his brother’s keeper. To accept injustice or segregation passively is to say to the oppressor that his actions are morally right. It is a way of allowing his conscience to fall asleep. At this moment the oppressed fails to be his brother’s keeper. So acquiescence—while often the easier way—is not the moral way. It is the way of the coward. The Negro cannot win the respect of his oppressor by acquiescing; he merely increases the oppressor’s arrogance and contempt. Acquiescence is interpreted as proof of the Negro’s inferiority. The Negro cannot win the respect of the white people of the South or the peoples of the world if he is willing to sell the future of his children for his personal and immediate comfort and safety.

A second way that oppressed people sometimes deal with oppression is to resort to physical violence and corroding hatred. Violence often brings about momentary results. Nations have frequently won their independence in battle. But in spite of temporary victories, violence never brings permanent peace. It solves no social problem; it merely creates new and more complicated ones.

Violence as a way of achieving racial justice is both impractical and immoral. It is impractical because it is a descending spiral ending in destruction for all. The old law of an eye for an eye leaves everybody blind. It is immoral because it seeks to humiliate the opponent rather than win his understanding; it seeks to annihilate rather than to convert. Violence is immoral because it thrives on hatred rather than love. It destroys community and makes brotherhood impossible. It leaves society in monologue rather than dialogue. Violence ends by defeating itself. It creates bitterness in the survivors and brutality in the destroyers. A voice echoes through time saying to every potential Peter, “Put up your sword.” [John 18:11] History is cluttered with the wreckage of nations that failed to follow this command.

If the American Negro and other victims of oppression succumb to the temptation of using violence in the struggle for freedom, future generations will be the recipients of a desolate night of bitterness, and our chief legacy to them will be an endless reign of meaningless chaos. Violence is not the way.

The third way open to oppressed people in their quest for freedom is the way of nonviolent resistance. Like the synthesis in Hegelian philosophy, the principle of nonviolent resistance seeks to reconcile the truths of two opposites—the acquiescence and violence—while avoiding the extremes and immoralities of both. The nonviolent resister agrees with the person who acquiesces that one should not be physically aggressive toward his opponent; but he balances the equation by agreeing with the person of violence that evil must be resisted. He avoids the non-resistant of the former and the violent resistance of the latter. With nonviolent resistance, no individual or group need submit to any wrong, nor need anyone resort to violence in order to right a wrong.

It seems to me that this is the method that must guide the actions of the Negro in the present crisis in race relations. Through nonviolent resistance the Negro will be able to rise to the noble height of opposing the unjust system while loving the perpetrators of the system. The Negro must work passionately and unrelentingly for full stature as a citizen, but he must not use inferior methods to gain it. He must never come to terms with falsehood, malice, hate, or destruction.

Nonviolent resistance makes it possible for the Negro to remain in the South and struggle for his rights. The Negro’s problems will not be solved by running away. He cannot listen to the glib suggestion of those who would urge him to migrate en masse to other sections of the country. By grasping his great opportunity in the South he can make a lasting contribution to the moral strength of the nation and set a sublime example of courage for generations yet unborn.

By nonviolent resistance, the Negro can also enlist all men of good will in his struggle for equality. The problem is not a purely racial one, with Negroes set against whites. In the end it is not a struggle between people at all, but a tension between justice and injustice. Nonviolent resistance is not aimed against oppressors but against oppression. Under its banner consciences, not racial groups, are enlisted.

**Writing assignments**

**Write a paragraph of classification on one of the following issues.**

**Write a paragraph of classification on one of the following issues.**

1) types of college students (as far as their different plans for future, different styles of learning, different backgrounds, etc.)

2) forms of online educational resources (as far as their different subjects, purposes, or ways of teaching)

3) classify types of bullying

4) types of methods to study for a final examination

5) classify different clubs on campus

6) types of extracurricular activities

7) types of note-taking strategies

8) types of communication strategies used to resolve conflicts in a dormitory (or at home)

9) alternative sources of energy

10) classify modern college courses