

9th Grade Semester One Final

Throughout the year, we practice the reading and writing processes that often lead to a magnificent sense of discovery. Students engage in critical inquiry and invest in their learning processes by cultivating skills such as the following: generating important questions; deriving meaning from texts; summarizing texts; identifying examples, drawing inferences, and making logical or comparative connections; organizing information in a variety of ways; synthesizing information to support one's purpose; evaluating and examining arguments; building one's understanding of visual literacy; writing and presenting to serve specific purposes and audiences; making significant connections between texts and real-life situations. The following questions allow you to demonstrate the knowledge and skills you have learned in class. In response to the following questions you will need to apply what you have learned in class and reflect on your academic career at FALA thus far.

1) Read the following passage from the novel *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck

A few miles south of Soledad, the Salinas River drops in close to the hillside bank and runs deep and green. The water is warm too, for it has slipped twinkling over the yellow sands in the sunlight before reaching the narrow pool. On one side of the river the golden foothill slopes curve up to the strong and Rocky Gabilan mountains, but on the valley side the water is lined with trees—willows fresh and green with every spring, carrying in their lower leaf junctures the debris of the winter's flooding; and sycamores with mottled white, recumbent limbs and branches that arch over the pool. On the sandy bank under the trees the leaves lie deep and so crisp that a lizard makes a great skittering if he runs among them. Rabbits come out of the brush to sit on the sand in the evening, and the damp flats are covered with the night tracks of 'coons, and with the split-wedge tracks of deer that come to drink in the dark.

There is a path through the willows and among the sycamores, a path beaten hard by boys coming down from the ranches to swim in the deep pool, and beaten hard by tramps who come wearily down from the highway in the evening to jungle-up near the water. In front of the low horizontal limb of a giant sycamore there is an ash pile made by many fires; the limb is worn smooth by men who have sat on it.

Evening of a hot day started the little wind to moving among the leaves. The shade climbed up the hills toward the top. On the sandbanks the rabbits sat as quietly as little gray, sculptured stones. And then from the direction of the highway came the sound of footsteps on crisp sycamore leaves. The rabbits hurried noiselessly for cover. A stilted heron labored up into the air and pounded down river. For a moment the place was lifeless, and then two men emerged from the path and came into the opening by the green pool.

They had walked in single file down the path, and even in the open one stayed behind the other. Both were dressed in denim trousers and in denim coats with brass buttons. Both wore black, shapeless hats and both carried tight blanket rolls slung over their shoulders. The first man was small and quick, dark of face, with restless eyes and sharp, strong features. Every part of him was defined: small, strong hands, slender arms, a thin and bony nose. Behind him walked his opposite: a huge man, shapeless of face, with large, pale eyes, with wide, sloping shoulders; and he walked heavily, dragging his feet a little, the way a bear drags his paws. His arms did not swing at his sides but hung loosely.

The first man stopped short in the clearing, and the follower nearly ran over him. He took off his hat and wiped the sweat-band with his forefinger and snapped the moisture off. His huge companion dropped his blankets and flung himself down and drank from the surface of the green pool; drank with long gulps, snorting into the water like a horse.

Fill out the following questions in complete sentences. You can answer each of these separately or in 1-2 paragraphs as a whole.

- a) What literary devices (and purposes or effects on the passage) are present? Patterns (and purposes of those patterns)? Subtext (what is not directly stated but definitely inferred)?
- b) What is the point of view: Who is narrating? What are advantages or limitations of this type of narration?
- c) What type of syntax and semantics does the author use? (how are the words arranged for effect? how long or short are the sentences or paragraphs? what is the effect of this on the passage?)
- d) What is the author trying to achieve in this passage? How do you know?
- e) What is the overall purpose of this passage?
- f) What predictions can you make?

2) Read the following excerpts from the speech by President Barack Obama, Arlington, Virginia, September 8, 2009. Then, complete the written assignment in response to the speech. *See below.

... at the end of the day, we can have the most dedicated teachers, the most supportive parents, and the best schools in the world – and none of it will matter unless all of you fulfill your responsibilities. Unless you show up to those schools; pay attention to those teachers; listen to your parents, grandparents and other adults; and put in the hard work it takes to succeed. And that’s what I want to focus on today: the responsibility each of you has for your education. I want to start with the responsibility you have to yourself. Every single one of you has something you’re good at. Every single one of you has something to offer. And you have a responsibility to yourself to discover what that is. That’s the opportunity an education can provide. Maybe you could be a good writer – maybe even good enough to write a book or articles in a newspaper – but you might not know it until you write a paper for your English class. Maybe you could be an innovator or an inventor – maybe even good enough to come up with the next iPhone or a new medicine or vaccine – but you might not know it until you do a project for your science class. Maybe you could be a mayor or a Senator or a Supreme Court Justice, but you might not know that until you join student government or the debate team. And no matter what you want to do with your life – I guarantee that you’ll need an education to do it. You want to be a doctor, or a teacher, or a police officer? You want to be a nurse or an architect, a lawyer or a member of our military? You’re going to need a good education for every single one of those careers. You can’t drop out of school and just drop into a good job. You’ve got to work for it and train for it and learn for it.

... You’ll need the knowledge and problem-solving skills you learn in science and math to cure diseases like cancer and AIDS, and to develop new energy technologies and protect our environment. You’ll need the insights and critical thinking skills you gain in history and social studies to fight poverty and homelessness, crime and discrimination, and make our nation more fair and more free. You’ll need the creativity and ingenuity you develop in all your classes to build new companies that will create new jobs and boost our economy. We need every single one of you to develop your talents, skills and intellect so you can help solve our most difficult problems. If you don’t do that – if you quit on school – you’re not just quitting on yourself, you’re quitting on your country. Now I know it’s not always easy to do well in school. I know a lot of you have challenges in your lives right now that can make it hard to focus on your schoolwork.

... Where you are right now doesn’t have to determine where you’ll end up. No one’s written your destiny for you. Here in America, you write your own destiny. You make your own future. So today, I want to ask you, what’s your contribution going to be? What problems are you going to solve? What discoveries will you make? What will a president who comes here in twenty or fifty or one hundred years say about what all of you did for this country? Your families, your teachers, and I are doing everything we can to make sure you have the education you need to answer these questions. I’m working hard to fix up your classrooms and get you the books, equipment and computers you need to learn. But you’ve got to do your part too. So I expect you to get

serious this year. I expect you to put your best effort into everything you do. I expect great things from each of you. So don't let us down – don't let your family or your country or yourself down. Make us all proud. I know you can do it.

a) Visionaries are big thinkers. They have a vision of what is and what should be. Barack Obama asks what you plan to be and how you will commit now to that progress for yourself and your family and your country. **Write a response in which you explain what you have decided to do based on this speech. Support your plan with references to his speech and your own ideas (1-2 paragraphs).**

3) Narrative of your choice. Based on the novel we read in class, *The Road* by Cormac McCarthy, write an alternative beginning or ending for the book, or for one of the characters (back story or after story), or insert yourself into the book and write an excerpt from the book from your point of view. *Your response should be 1-2 paragraphs long and can be completed on a separate sheet of paper.

4) Please reflect on our class' theme of Personal Legend (5-7 sentences).

5) Please describe how you have exemplified FALA's Five Habits of Heart and Mind in and out of class this year (5-7 sentences total).

a. Common Good: Building a functional community by evaluating the impact of individual actions on the rest of the group and making decisions accordingly.

b. Connection and Collaboration: Working with diverse concepts, techniques, objects and people to further meaningful intellectual and artistic understandings.

c. Investment: Demonstrating a commitment to education and learning by taking responsibility for personal success and making significant contributions to FALA.

d. Creativity: Pushing the boundaries of accepted understandings and ideas by making innovative interpretations, connections, creations, and productions.

e. Critical Inquiry: Seeking out, analyzing, and synthesizing different perspectives and allowing these perspectives to change individual understandings, thought processes, and actions.

6) Do you know what your current grade is in Ms. Gilmore's English Class? If so, what is your current letter grade? What grade do you believe you deserve in Ms. Gilmore's English Class?

1) ____/20 pts

4) ____/10 pts

2) ____/20 pts

5) ____/25 pts

3) ____/20 pts

6) ____/5 pts

Total: ____/100 pts

