
Culminating Writing Task

Prompt:

How do the various texts in the unit treat the topic of the American Dream as described by Cullen?

Write an explanatory essay in response to the question that conveys complex ideas clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of the various texts. Be sure use proper grammar, conventions, spelling, and grade-appropriate words and phrases. Cite several pieces of strong and thorough textual evidence that is integrated while maintaining the flow of ideas and including proper citation.

1. Underline the main task(s) and highlight other directions of the prompt.
2. In your own words, what two things is this task asking you to do?
3. Look over the Cullen central idea analysis for Cullen's text. Read through your notes. List three of Cullen's central ideas in the space below.
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4. What texts from the unit will you connect to Cullen's central ideas?

5. Use your American Dream Anchor Chart to complete the chart below:

Central Idea from Cullen	Text that connects to this central idea	How does this text connect to Cullen's central idea? Use textual evidence to support your claim.
1.	•	• • •
2.	•	• • •
3.	•	• • •

6. Compose a working thesis:

In Cullen's book, *The American Dream: A Short History of an Idea that Shaped a Nation*, the author claims that _____; these ideas about the American Dream are also seen in _____

7. Organize your essay:

Introduction:

Interesting intro:

Thesis:

Body Paragraph 1 Topic: _____

Topic sentence:

Texts to discuss/Quotations to use:

Body Paragraph 2 Topic: _____

Topic Sentence:

Texts to discuss/Quotations to use:

Body Paragraph 3 Topic: _____

Topic Sentence:

Texts to discuss/Quotations to use:

Conclusion:

8. Draft your paper.

9. In your small groups:

- Trade papers with another student.
- Read one paragraph from his/her paper.
- Add one-two independent or dependent clauses that will add clarity to the paragraph.
- Find two places that lack cohesion. Make suggestions of words or phrases to add to the paragraph to increase cohesion.
- Switch papers with another student and repeat this process.

8. Self-Evaluation. Read your paper and ask yourself these questions:

Self- Evaluation Checklist	
Did I:	✓
fully discuss the text's meaning? Did I go beyond summarizing?	
include information that was stated in the text and information that was inferred?	
address the prompt?	
make a claim that was specific and precise?	
include support for my claim?	
balance information from various texts (i.e. did not include too much from one source)?	
include language that created cohesion (i.e. transitional words and phrases)?	
vary my syntax and use specific vocabulary?	
maintain a formal tone throughout the paper?	
maintain correct language conventions throughout my paper?	



use correct MLA citations throughout the paper?	
include a Works Cited page listing all of my sources?	

9. Make any corrections needed after your self-evaluation.

10. Write your final draft.