Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

American Studies English

**Summer Reading Thesis Essay**

*Outliers*: Malcom Gladwell’s Definition of the American Dream



The traditional concept of the American Dream is rooted in the idea that the freedoms citizens in the United States are provided with allow one to apply dedication and hard work to pursue his or her passions and dreams of success, regardless of circumstances at birth. In his non-fiction work *Outliers*, Malcolm Gladwell does not refute the value of diligence and determination as essential components to achieving success, but he also re-envisions the idea of the American Dream to argue that there are other factors that influence one’s ability to attain his or her goals.

**Essay prompt:**

In the non-fiction work *Outliers*, how does Malcolm Gladwell use the specific narrations in the text to re-envision the American Dream and argue that while a strong work ethic is essential in obtaining success, an individual’s achievement is also influenced by his or her circumstances and cultural legacy?

Your assignment:

1. Evaluate the prompt.
2. Develop an MI that you will prove through this essay.
3. Create an idea tree (MI, 2 DIs, 4 DQs, AI points) that outlines how you will support your argument.
4. Write a four paragraph essay which includes the following:
   * 1. Introduction
     2. DP 1
     3. DP 2
     4. Conclusion with RFS
5. Upload the final draft of your essay to turnitin.com on or before the due date.
6. On the due date, turn in your idea tree, first draft, self-edit sheet, typed final draft, and rubric in class.

**Questions to Guide Your Analysis:**

1. What is the significance of this specific developmental detail?
2. What is Malcolm Gladwell suggesting through this developmental detail?
3. How does this developmental detail reflect Gladwell’s re-envisioned American Dream?

Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

American Studies English

**Summer Reading Thesis Essay**

*Outliers*: Malcom Gladwell’s Definition of the American Dream

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **4** | **3** | **2** | **1** |
| **Main Idea/Analysis** | Main Idea is extremely well developed and demonstrates a strong understanding of the prompt; analysis is thorough and directly supports the MI. | Main Idea is well developed and demonstrates a strong understanding of the prompt; analysis directly supports the MI. | Main Idea is clear, but may be lacking some development; some analysis does not directly support the MI. | Main Idea is unclear and lacks development; analysis does not support the MI. |
| **Organization and Structure** | Essay is extremely well organized; has complete and clear topic sentences that effectively answer the prompt; details follow in logical order. | Essay is well-organized; mostly complete and clear topic sentences that effectively answer the prompt; most details follow in logical order. | Essay may have 1-2 errors in organization; details follow in a somewhat logical order but there may be errors in topic sentence structure. | Essay has inadequate topic sentences that do not effectively answer the prompt; details that follow are not in logical order. |
| **Style: Word Choice and Sentence Structure** | Essay includes varied word choice and sophisticated and appropriately used vocabulary words; sentence structure is varied and contributes to the overall fluidity of the essay. | Word choice in the essay is generally varied, sophisticated vocabulary is incorporated throughout most of the paper although 1-2 words may need to be revised; sentence structure is generally varied, but 1-2 passages of the essay may be somewhat choppy. | Some words are repeated continuously throughout the essay; there is a need for more sophisticated vocabulary; sentence structure lacks variation in 3-4 passages and creates a sense of choppiness to the essay. | Essay lacks the incorporation of sophisticated vocabulary and varied sentence structure. |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Grammar & Spelling (Conventions)** | Writer makes no errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content of the essay. | Writer makes 1-2 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content of the essay. | Writer makes 3-4 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content of the essay. | Writer makes more than 4 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content of the essay. |
| **MLA Format/Elements of the Writing Process** | Assignment is in MLA format and all elements of the writing process are included. | 1-2 mistakes in MLA format; some elements of the writing process may be missing. | 3-4 mistakes in MLA format; some elements of the writing process may be missing. | Numerous mistakes in MLA format. Many elements of the writing process are not present. |

**RUBRIC**

**SUMMATIVE FEEDBACK**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **STRENGTHS** | **AREAS TO IMPROVE** |
| \_\_\_\_\_ Your essay is well organized, and your MI is clear and developed.  \_\_\_\_\_ Strong incorporation of textual evidence.  \_\_\_\_\_ Good initial analysis points.  \_\_\_\_\_ Meaningful and relevant connections in your RFS.  \_\_\_\_\_ Precise attention to MLA and the writing process. | \_\_\_\_\_ Develop background information in introduction paragraph.  \_\_\_\_\_ Pay attention to organization, specifically topic sentence structure and concluding sentence structure.  \_\_\_\_\_ Support your MI by clarifying and building line of development.  \_\_\_\_\_ Develop more dynamic word choice and sentence structure.  \_\_\_\_\_ Enrich your RFS by placing the text in a larger context.  \_\_\_\_\_ Be consistent with MLA and formatting rules.  \_\_\_\_\_ Proofread to be aware of issues with spelling, grammar and mechanics. |