Civil Rights Essay Assignment

The civil rights movement is arguably one of the most powerful and transformative eras in American History. This essay is designed to synthesize your knowledge of that era with what is currently happening in our society. To narrow your focus, you will choose a lens by which to compare and contrast yesterday and today. Example of areas you may focus on include education, housing, poverty, voting rights, ability to secure a job, equal pay for equal work, treatment by police, etc. Once you have chosen a focus, you will compare and contrast how your area of focus was handled during the civil rights movement, and how it is handled today. After you have done this, you will ultimately share your thoughts about how our society can move forward in its quest to truly achieve racial equality, in every sense of the word.

Your essay will contain five paragraphs: an introduction, three body paragraphs, and a conclusion. You may type it, but it is not required. If you choose to type your essay, it is your responsibility to have a printed copy to peer review. I will not be printing documents for you, nor will your other teachers.

First, you will create an outline. This will help you organize your essay. Then you will compose your body paragraphs. After that, you will write your introduction and conclusion. Next, you will complete a peer review with another student. **You will be graded each day on your ability to complete each portion of this project**. You will also be graded on your final product. Paragraphs should be no less than 6 sentences in length, and contain correct spelling and grammar. If you need to cite sources, please use MLA format.

You actually have a lot of freedom in this essay, and a lot of room for your own opinion. However, a strong opinion is rooted in facts and has examples to support it. This paper takes the knowledge you have gained from the civil rights movement and challenges you to use it in a deeper and more meaningful way. Catalog the past, confront the present, and determine what the catalyst will be for a better future.

**Here is the timeline for this project:**

Wednesday May 13: Project Introduction. Complete outline, and begin body paragraphs in class, finish them for homework.

Thursday May 14: Body Paragraph check at the BEGINNING of class. Work on introduction and conclusion in class, finish them for homework.

Friday May 15: Introduction and conclusion check at the BEGINNING of class. All five paragraphs should be complete and ready for peer review. Peer review of another student’s essay, and have them review yours. Begin editing once peer review is complete. Finish all editing for homework.

Monday May 18: Submit finalized copy of your essay. This should be written neatly or typed.

You will very likely have to work at home to keep up with the timeline. Be prepared to do homework, and to revise your work until it is perfect!

Writing Rubric

 10 9 8 7 6 5 4

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|  ***Content: Ideas***  | My essay has a compelling thesis that skillfully appeals to the audience. My essay goes well beyond the obvious.  | My essay has an effective thesis (position) that makes a clear and knowledgeable judgment.  | My thesis is too narrow, too broad, or not immediately clear to the reader  | My thesis is unclear and my position is too broad and generally weak.  |
|  | My essay presents powerful arguments to support thesis. I’ve used well-documented evidence to provide a consistent and convincing perspective on the issue  | I have effectively supported my thesis with relevant arguments and evidence.  | The supporting arguments and evidence I’ve used is insufficient or irrelevant. My essay lacks explanation and elaboration.  | My essay has unsupported generalizations or I’ve used little to no supportive or credible evidence.  |
|  | My essay effectively addresses opposing viewpoints and provides strong counter-arguments. I’ve built a convincing and well-focused argument.  | My essay acknowledges an opposing viewpoint and provides a reasonable counter -argument.  | My essay addresses an opposing viewpoint but does NOT provide a reasonable counter- argument.  | My essay fails to address any opposing viewpoints or to provide counter-arguments.  |
| ***Organization***  | My essay has a strong and engaging introduction. I have skillfully sequenced my ideas and supportive evidence. My conclusion is powerful, reinforcing thesis and giving closure.  | I have used an appropriate structure. I have and engaging introduction. I have presented ideas in a logical progression. My conclusion reinforces my thesis and gives closure.  | My essay has a weak structure. It lacks consistency of ideas. Evidence may be isolated facts with weak sequencing.  | My essay has little to no structure. My essay lacks a logical progression of ideas.  |
| ***Voice: Purpose, Audience, and Tone***  | My voice is authentic, confident, convincing and imbedded within the textual information. There is a clear sense of audience and purpose.  | My voice is confident and authentic. I am clearly engaged with my topic. My writing has a clear sense of audience and purpose.  | My essay has straight facts with a voice detached from topic. I have a sense of purpose and/or audience.  | In my writing there is no clear or no sense of voice, purpose, or audience.  |
| ***Word Choice: Diction***  | I chose precise words to powerfully convey my intended message.  | I chose effective words and phrases to convey my message.  | I have used vague and ordinary words, so my message isn’t as powerful as it could be.  | I have used a very limited vocabulary or used words incorrectly.  |
| ***Sentence*** ***Fluency***  | I have used purposeful and innovative sentence structure to enhance my intended effect. I have skillfully managed the transitioning between ideas and paragraphs.  | My essay has strong sentence structure and variety, and I have effectively used transitions to connect ideas.  | I have attempted to vary my sentence structure, but many of my sentences sound the same. I have limited use of transitions to connect my ideas.  | I write in complete sentences but do not vary the sentence patterns. I have some awkward or faulty sentences. I don’t use transitions to connect ideas within my essay.  |
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| ***Technical Qualities and Mechanics***  | My essay shows creativity and flexibility when using conventions to enhance my meaning.  | I have a few minor conventional errors that do not obscure my meaning.  | My conventional errors occasionally obscure my meaning.  | I have a lot of conventional errors that seriously interfere with the overall effectiveness of my essay.  |

Outline: 10 points

Completion of draft of Body Paragraphs on time and to quality: 30 points

Completion of draft if Introduction and Conclusion on time and to quality: 20 points

Peer mediation analysis: 10 points

Finalized essay: 80 points

**Total Points Possible: 150**

This will go in as a test grade!!