

February 1, 2008

Dear Parents,

We have started a new homework program in Language Arts this project which focuses on responding to MCAS-style writing prompts. We will spend a couple weeks going over this in class and working on strategies for planning and writing the essays. Hopefully, this practice in independent writing will help the students when they take the English Language Arts MCAS in 7th grade, and also when they are required to write without teacher assistance in higher grades.

As the purpose of this is to learn how to write independently for the MCAS, we are asking that you not help your child with this work at home. If he or she seems to need a lot of support, we can work with your child after school, but the goal here is for the students to develop the skills to work independently. Also, most students should be handwriting these essays, as that will be the case on the MCAS. Students who receive testing modifications and will be allowed to type their essays on the MCAS **are** allowed to use computers if they want. All students can use a dictionary as a resource while writing the essays.

Most students are expected to write one essay every two weeks, but some students may choose to work towards distinguished marks by doing one essay per week. On the back of this page, you will find the weekly schedule for completing this work. Below, please indicate whether your child is striving for proficient or distinguished.

Please get in touch with us if you have any questions on this new program.

Thank you!

Kate Lew

Katy Lianos

Mairéad Sullivan

Student's Name: _____

Your child chose to work towards: proficient distinguished

5th Grade Homework – Project 3

MCAS Writing Prompts

For your Language Arts homework during this project, you will be practicing responding to MCAS-style writing prompts.

Assessment:

Your effort grade will be entirely up to you. Consider the following options and decide what your goal is.

- ❑ To receive a **novice** in effort if you complete less than one writing prompt every two weeks and put in minimal effort.
- ❑ You will receive an **apprentice** in effort if you complete one writing prompt every two weeks (4 essays total) and put in insufficient effort.
- ❑ You will receive a **proficient** in effort if you complete one writing prompt every two weeks (4 essays total) and put in substantial effort.
- ❑ You will receive a **distinguished** in effort if you complete one writing prompt every week (8 essays total) and put in substantial effort.

Schedule (Proficient)

	Monday HW (Due Wednesday)	Wednesday HW (Due Friday)
Week 1	1. Brainstorm list of possible topics. 2. Create a web with sufficient supporting details.	3. Complete a first draft of your essay on loose-leaf paper.
Week 2	4. Edit your first draft in a different color. Remember to look for content and COPS.	5. Complete the final draft of your essay on loose-leaf paper. GRADED

Schedule (Distinguished)

	Monday HW (Due Wednesday)	Wednesday HW (Due Friday)
Week 1	1. Brainstorm list of possible topics. 2. Create a web with sufficient supporting details. 3. Complete a first draft of your essay on loose-leaf paper.	4. Edit your first draft in a different color. Remember to look for content and COPS. 5. Complete the final draft of your essay on loose-leaf paper. GRADED

Remember:

- You should be completing these essays without help at home.
- Your essay should be handwritten unless you have received special permission to type.
- You may use a dictionary as a resource.
- Your essay needs to include a complete heading and must be turned in a certain order.