

## Summer Reading Assignment: English I – All Levels

**For questions before the start of the school year, contact Ms. Sarah Shepard ([shepards@leonschools.net](mailto:shepards@leonschools.net)). Please direct questions to your English teacher once the year has begun.**

### General Instructions

All incoming 9<sup>th</sup> grade students, regardless of level, will complete the following assignment. All of the reading materials, tasks, and instructions needed for this assignment can be found in this packet.

There are three (3) short texts—a poem, an argument, and a non-fiction excerpt—each with an assigned task with three questions. Please read all directions carefully and pay attention to word count requirements. The culminating assignment requires students to take the ideas presented in the three texts about success and translate them to their own lives. You will reflect on your own academic strengths and weaknesses and develop SMART goals for the upcoming school year in order to set yourself up for success in high school. Then, students will write a letter to their senior self (you'll get this back before graduation!) reflecting on their present-day lives and their future goals.

The Summer Reading Assignment will be due the second Friday of school—August 22<sup>nd</sup>—and will count as a summative grade in the first nine weeks. Your responses to the analysis questions in each task must be typed in a single document (label each task clearly) and submitted to Turnitin through Canvas. Handwritten responses will not be accepted. Be sure to save your work as you go! Your teacher will give you instructions for submitting your assignment the first week of school.

### Texts and Tasks (all texts and assignments can be found in this packet)

1. **Poem:** "Invictus" by William Ernest Henley (p. 2)
  - ✓ **Task 1** (p. 3)
2. **Point/Counterpoint:** "Mandatory Volunteer Work for Teenagers" (p. 4-7)
  - ✓ **Task 2** (p. 7)
3. **Non-Fiction:** excerpt from *Outliers: The Story of Success* by Malcolm Gladwell (p. 8-10)
  - ✓ **Task 3** (p. 10)
4. **Culminating Assignment** (p. 11-12)
  - ✓ **Part 1: Setting SMART Goals** (p. 11-12)
  - ✓ **Part 2: Letter to Your Future Self** (p. 12-13)

**"Invictus"**

**William Ernest Henley**

**Poetry, 1875**

William Ernest Henley was a Victorian poet best known for his poem "Invictus." The title of the poem means "unconquered"<sup>1</sup> in Latin, an appropriate title for a poem in which the speaker declares that he is the master<sup>2</sup> of his own destiny.<sup>3</sup> South African freedom fighter<sup>4</sup> Nelson Mandela<sup>5</sup> is among the many who have been inspired by the poem's powerful message. In the first stanza, he thanks the gods for his undefeatable soul, which helps him deal with the dark night that surrounds him. No matter the circumstance, the speaker does not cry. Though he has been bloodied, he is not fearful and keeps his head upright. In the third and fourth stanzas, the speaker refers to the horrors of his current time and place. Still, he moves forward unafraid. In the final lines of the poem, he states that he is the master of his own fate and the commander of his soul.

BEST Standards addressed in this task: FL-ELA.9.1.1, FL-ELA.9.R.1.2, FL-ELA.9.R.1.4, FL-ELA.9.FL-ELA.9.V.1.3, FL-ELA.K12.EE.1.1, FL-ELA.K12.EE.2.1, FL-ELA.K12.EE.3.1, FL-ELA.K12.EE.6.1

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- [1] Out of the night that covers me,  
Black as the pit from pole to pole,<sup>6</sup>  
I thank whatever gods may be  
For my unconquerable soul.
- [2] In the fell<sup>7</sup> clutch of circumstance<sup>8</sup>  
I have not winced nor cried aloud.  
Under the bludgeonings<sup>9</sup> of chance<sup>10</sup>  
My head is bloody, but unbowed.
- [3] Beyond this place of wrath<sup>11</sup> and tears  
Looms<sup>12</sup> but the horror of the shade,<sup>13</sup>  
And yet the menace<sup>14</sup> of the years  
Finds, and shall find, me unafraid.
- [4] It matters not how strait<sup>15</sup> the gate,  
How charged with punishments the scroll,  
I am the master of my fate:  
I am the captain of my soul.

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<sup>1</sup> not defeated or controlled

<sup>2</sup> one having authority

<sup>3</sup> future experiences

<sup>4</sup> person who is part of an organized group fighting against an unfair government

<sup>5</sup> former president of South Africa who fought against apartheid (a policy of segregation and discrimination on grounds of race)

<sup>6</sup> from the North Pole to the South Pole

<sup>7</sup> **Fell** (adjective): cruel or deadly

<sup>8</sup> uncontrolled way in which things happen

<sup>9</sup> **Bludgeoning** (noun): a feeling of being beaten or hit with a heavy object

<sup>10</sup> unplanned way in which events happen

<sup>11</sup> punishment from an outside force

<sup>12</sup> **Loom** (verb): to appear threateningly near

<sup>13</sup> **Shade** (noun): a spirit or ghost; (from Greek/Roman religion) a spirit of the dead inhabiting the underworld

<sup>14</sup> dangerous or threatening quality

<sup>15</sup> **Strait** (adjective): (archaic) narrow

**Task 1: "Invictus"**

1. **Point of View:** Fill in the following sentence. Then write 1-2 sentences explaining how you determined the tense and point of view, citing specific details from the text.

William Ernest Henley's poem, "Invictus." is written mainly in the \_\_\_\_\_ tense, from a \_\_\_\_\_ point of view.

👉 *Hint: verb tenses indicate when an action happens, specifically in the past, present, or future. Point of view is how the narrator tells a story and reflects how the narrator feels and thinks about the characters and events. First person narrators use pronouns I, me, and my. Second person narrators use pronouns you and your. Third person narrators use pronouns he, she, and they.*

2. **Theme:** What is the theme of the poem? What details in each stanza help develop the theme? In 2-3 sentences, summarize the theme in your own words.

👉 *Hint: Theme is the overall idea or message about life in a text. It is usually not stated directly in the text, but it must be inferred by details in the text. To identify the theme, start by identifying the central idea or central message the author is trying to say with the poem, and then look for supporting details that help you understand what message about life the author is making with his central idea.*

3. **Personal Response:** Respond to the following journal prompt in a paragraph of 200-250 words. What does the poem suggest about what can happen in our lives, and how much of it we can actually control? In what ways does the poem address this question? How can you apply an understanding of the speaker's unique situation to circumstances in your own life? Support your answer with evidence from the text.

**“Mandatory Volunteer Work for Teenagers”**

**Point/Counterpoint**

**Non-Fiction, 2014**

*In these two articles, the writers make cases<sup>16</sup> for and against making volunteer work a mandatory part of school curriculum.<sup>17</sup> While volunteering can be a valuable<sup>18</sup> experience that enriches the lives of both the volunteers and the people they help, some are concerned that forcing teens to volunteer may do more harm than good. Each article presents strong arguments and supports its claims with evidence. Which argument do you feel is more convincing?*

*B.E.S.T Standards addressed in this task: FL-ELA.9.R.2.2, FL-ELA.9.R.2.3, FL-ELA.9.R.2.4, FL-ELA.9.V.1.3 FL-ELA.K12.EE.1.1 FL-ELA.K12.EE.2.1 FL-ELA.K12.EE.3.1 FL-ELA.K12.EE.6.1*

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**Volunteer Work for Teenagers: Should It Be Mandatory?**

**POINT: Give Teens Some Work to Do! It's Good for Them and Everyone Else**

- [1] Teenagers today live in a confusing world. The media<sup>19</sup> sends many mixed messages about what it means to be a helpful person in society. One of the best ways to help teens find their way is to make volunteer work a mandatory<sup>20</sup> part of their school curriculum. Some people would immediately argue that this is an unnecessary action—many teens already volunteer without it being a requirement. It's true: teens have a propensity<sup>21</sup> to volunteer more than adults. However, as a society we should make sure that not just some, but all, teens volunteer. Many of the teens that volunteer do so as part of a religious group or a youth leadership organization. In fact, 46 percent of teens who volunteer are working with a religious group or a youth leadership organization while only 18 percent of teens who volunteer are working with school-based groups. This shows that clearly the best way to include all teens in the benefits of volunteering is to add mandatory volunteer work to the school curriculum.
- [2] There are many benefits to volunteering. One obvious benefit is that volunteering helps the community—volunteers help the elderly, the disabled,<sup>22</sup> and children. Furthermore, many people are able to receive food and medical assistance<sup>23</sup> that they would not receive otherwise thanks to the hard work of volunteers. And let's not forget the environment! Volunteers make our world a cleaner place by doing things like picking up trash and teaching others about recycling. However, volunteering brings advantages that many people don't think of right away: benefits to the volunteers themselves! According to the United Way,<sup>24</sup> volunteering helps people make important networking contacts, develop new skills, gain work experience, and enhance<sup>25</sup> their resumé.<sup>26</sup> All of these benefits are crucial<sup>27</sup> to teens who will soon be entering the workforce. The United Way also says that volunteering gives people the opportunity to teach their skills to others and build self-esteem and confidence. These two benefits are helpful to teens who are developing their social skills. Finally, the United Way says that volunteering improves people's health and helps to make a difference in someone's life, benefits that

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<sup>16</sup> arguments

<sup>17</sup> courses offered by a school

<sup>18</sup> important or worthy

<sup>19</sup> the main means of mass communication (broadcasting, publishing, and the internet) regarded collectively.

<sup>20</sup> **Mandatory** (adjective): required by rule

<sup>21</sup> **Propensity** (noun): a strong natural tendency to do something

<sup>22</sup> People who have a physical or mental condition that limits movements, senses, or activities.

<sup>23</sup> Food and medical assistance programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Medicaid, provide support for individuals and families facing financial hardship. These programs are designed to ensure access to basic needs like food and healthcare.

<sup>24</sup> United Way is a network of local and international organizations dedicated to improving lives by mobilizing communities to address challenges in education, financial stability, and health.

<sup>25</sup> improve the quality of

<sup>26</sup> A resumé is a concise, formal document summarizing an individual's work experience, education, skills, and other relevant qualifications.

<sup>27</sup> of great importance

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are wonderful for volunteers at any age! The numerous<sup>28</sup> advantages that come from volunteering definitely warrant<sup>29</sup> making volunteering a compulsory<sup>30</sup> part of school curriculum.

- [3] One very specific reason to tie volunteer work to education is that teen volunteers are more likely to succeed academically than teens who don't volunteer. Back in 2005, a collaborative study conducted by the Corporation for National and Community Service and the U.S. Census Bureau revealed that students who do better in school are more likely to be volunteers. There are numerous possible reasons for this trend. It may be because teenagers who volunteer learn new skills, or because the work helps teenagers build confidence, or because volunteering provides a sense of purpose. Whatever the reason, the abundantly<sup>31</sup> clear link between students who volunteer and academic success is too important to be ignored.
- [4] What happens to teenagers who volunteer as they grow into adults? They continue to volunteer, of course! According to the United Way, volunteering as a youth will increase the chances that a person will volunteer as an adult, which makes sense given the many benefits of volunteering. Unfortunately, however, adults who were never encouraged to volunteer as youths may never start because they are oblivious of the benefits. A simple solution to this would be to make volunteer work a mandatory part of the school curriculum so that everyone will be provided the opportunity to be exposed to the helpful benefits of volunteering. Aside from the benefits to the individual volunteer, think about the benefit to society as a whole. Community service programs across the country will have a fresh new crop of enthusiastic,<sup>32</sup> lifelong volunteers to count on. Everyone knows that volunteers make the United States a better place. The more volunteers, young and old, the better!
- [5] The evidence is clear: Volunteering is beneficial to both the community and the volunteers themselves. Because the advantages of volunteering so heavily outweigh the disadvantages, it makes sense to start people on a path of volunteerism early by making volunteering a mandatory part of the school curriculum.

**COUNTERPOINT: Mandatory Volunteer Work Does More Harm Than Good**

- [6] Most people agree that teenagers today live in a difficult world. There are more pressures facing the modern teen than we can count: school, work, family, sports, and other extracurricular activities,<sup>33</sup> just to name a few. However, some people think that we should add to that load of pressures by making volunteer work a mandatory part of the school curriculum. One of the greatest arguments for this action is that mandatory volunteer work will prepare students for the future by giving them work experience, but the flaw<sup>34</sup> in this logic is that many teens already gain work experience through paying jobs. In fact, many of the teens working paying jobs are doing so out of necessity<sup>35</sup>—to pay for gas to get back and forth to school, or to help their families with extra money. Those teens without paying jobs still have plenty of prospects<sup>36</sup> for gaining work experience in other ways such as an internship,<sup>37</sup> or working at a school paper. Another argument for making volunteer work a mandatory part of school curriculum is

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<sup>28</sup> many

<sup>29</sup> justify a certain course of action

<sup>30</sup> required

<sup>31</sup> extremely

<sup>32</sup> having intense enjoyment, interest, or approval

<sup>33</sup> describing school activities that are not required and not graded

<sup>34</sup> Fault or error

<sup>35</sup> Requirement

<sup>36</sup> The possibility or likelihood of something happening in the future

<sup>37</sup> the position of a student or trainee who works in an organization, sometimes without pay, in order to gain work experience

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that this work will help teens gain self-esteem and self-confidence. However, having time to socialize and develop hobbies and other interests is more important for self-esteem and self-confidence than volunteering.

- [7] The most compelling<sup>38</sup> argument against making volunteer work a mandatory part of school curriculum is time. Teens today are just too busy to add another stressor<sup>39</sup> to their lives. Let's take a look at twenty-four hours in the life of a typical teen. Allocate<sup>40</sup> eight hours per day for sleep, eight hours for school (including getting ready and travel time), three hours for homework, two hours for activities such as sports or a part-time job, two hours for dinner and family time, and one hour for socializing. These activities take up all twenty-four hours leaving scarcely any time for volunteer work. Should students have to sacrifice their one hour of socializing per day, or sacrifice an hour of precious family time? These options just don't make sense as making more demands on teens' packed schedules can have serious side effects. Teens who are too busy feel tired, anxious, or depressed. Studies show they often have headaches or stomachaches due to stress, missed meals, or lack of sleep and they may fall behind in school, causing their grades to suffer. These drawbacks clearly outweigh the benefits of volunteering.
- [8] The most compelling<sup>41</sup> argument against making volunteer work a mandatory part of Another problem with making volunteer work a mandatory part of curriculum is that it defeats the purpose of volunteering in the first place. People volunteer because they have extra time and energy to give, and they genuinely want to help. Students that are forced to volunteer may resent<sup>42</sup> the demand on their time, and therefore perform the work grudgingly.<sup>43</sup> This will not help to make students feel useful or helpful, which would be counterproductive.<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, students will not be able to experience the positive social benefits of volunteering because they see it as a requirement rather than a positive experience. Because of forced volunteer work, students may hesitate<sup>45</sup> to explore volunteering as an adult. This is a huge drawback because there are genuine<sup>46</sup> benefits to volunteering when someone actually has the time and means to do so.
- [9] The most compelling<sup>47</sup> argument against making volunteer work a mandatory part of Finally, there is great evidence that the teens that do have the time to volunteer already do! This eliminates the need to make volunteer work mandatory. In 2005, a collaborative study on the volunteering habits of teenagers conducted by the Corporation for National and Community Service and the U.S. Census Bureau revealed that an estimated 15.5 million teens between the ages of 12 and 18 do volunteer work. This is about 55 percent of youth, a number all the more astounding<sup>48</sup> when compared to the meager<sup>49</sup> 29 percent of adults who do volunteer work. They also found that young people complete more than 1.3 billion hours of volunteer work each year. These findings demonstrate that a significant number of teenagers are already participating in service to their communities when they are able. Since volunteer work is clearly popular among teenagers, it is safe to assume that the minority of teenagers who do not volunteer are only choosing not to participate because they do not have the time.

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<sup>38</sup> Important

<sup>39</sup> Something that causes stress

<sup>40</sup> **Allocate** (verb): to set aside and distribute for a purpose or plan

<sup>41</sup> Important

<sup>42</sup> Feel bitter about

<sup>43</sup> **Grudgingly** (adverb): unwillingly

<sup>44</sup> Having the opposite of the desired effect

<sup>45</sup> Pause

<sup>46</sup> Real



<sup>47</sup> Important

<sup>48</sup> Surprising

<sup>49</sup> Small or lacking

- [10] Making volunteer work a mandatory part of school curriculum may seem like a good idea at first glance. Volunteering is good for the community and offers many benefits for the person volunteering as well. However, upon further examination it becomes clear that this is not a good plan. Adding another time stressor into the lives of teenagers just isn't worth it.

**Task 2: "Mandatory Volunteer Work for Teenagers"**

1. **Personal Response:** How do our own life experiences and preferences help us to determine what is work and what is play? According to the COUNTERPOINT essay, mandating volunteer work could result in adults who are too resentful to volunteer. Do you agree with this warning? Why or why not? Cite evidence, including the way the argument is structured, to support your ideas and explain your position in 2-3 sentences.
2. **Evidence and Reasoning:** The essays contain some of the same pieces of information, but used in different ways. For examples, both essays claim that more teens do volunteer work than adults. How do the essays contextualize that information in order to make different points? Is there a fact or facts in one essay that conflicts with, or contradicts, a fact or facts in the other? What are these points and how does the author use them? Your response should be 2-3 sentences and include specific evidence from the texts.  
 *Hint: Evidence is source-based information including facts, figures, and details used to support the writer or speaker's central idea or claim. Authors use information or evidence to show or seem to prove something to be true.*
3. **Evaluating Arguments:** Reread the text you find less persuasive and examine how the author introduced, developed, and connected the main points of the argument. Why were you less persuaded by the facts and opinions in this text? How did the author of the stronger text make better connections? Your response should be a well-developed paragraph of 200-250 words that cites specific evidence from the texts to support your ideas.  
 *Hint: If something is persuasive, it is convincing and the audience is more likely to agree with it. This can be accomplished through techniques such as a coherent series of reasons, statements, or facts intended to support or establish a point of view. Rhetorical appeals, such as logos (logic and evidence), ethos (credibility of the speaker), or pathos (emotional connections), and rhetorical devices, such as irony, rhetorical questions, understatements, hyperbole, imagery, or antithesis, are also used to convince the audience of the author's claims.*

Excerpt from *Outliers: The Story of Success*

Malcolm Gladwell

Non-Fiction, 2008

Malcolm Gladwell (b. 1963) wrote *Outliers: The Story of Success* to unravel some of the conventional wisdom about what sets extremely high achievers apart from the rest of us. In this excerpt, Gladwell argues that practice is far more important than natural talent, and explains the 10,000-hour rule, which holds that it takes that much practice time to achieve true mastery at anything.

BEST Standards addressed in this task: FL-ELA.9.R.2.2, FL-ELA.9.R.2.3, FL-ELA.9.C.3.1, FL-ELA.K12.EE.1.1 FL-ELA.K12.EE.2.1 FL-ELA.K12.EE.3.1 FL-ELA.K12.EE.6.1

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**From Chapter Two: The 10,000-Hour Rule**

- [1] For almost a generation, psychologists<sup>50</sup> around the world have been engaged<sup>51</sup> in a spirited debate<sup>52</sup> over a question that most of us would consider to have been settled years ago. The question is this: is there such a thing as innate<sup>53</sup> talent? The obvious answer is yes. Not every hockey player born in January ends up playing at the professional level. Only some do—the innately talented ones. Achievement is talent plus preparation. The problem with this view is that the closer psychologists look at the careers of the gifted, the smaller the role innate talent seems to play and the bigger the role preparation seems to play.
- [2] Exhibit A in the talent argument is a study done in the early 1990s by the psychologist K. Anders Ericsson and two colleagues at Berlin's elite Academy of Music. With the help of the Academy's professors, they divided the school's violinists<sup>54</sup> into three groups. In the first group were the stars, the students with the potential to become world-class soloists.<sup>55</sup> In the second were those judged to be merely<sup>56</sup> "good." In the third were students who were unlikely to ever play professionally and who intended to be music teachers in the public school system. All of the violinists were then asked the same question: over the course of your entire career, ever since you first picked up the violin, how many hours have you practiced?
- [3] Everyone from all three groups started playing at roughly the same age, around five years old. In those first few years, everyone practiced roughly the same amount, about two or three hours a week. But when the students were around the age of eight, real differences started to emerge.<sup>57</sup> The students who would end up the best in their class began to practice more than everyone else: six hours a week by age nine, eight hours a week by age twelve, sixteen hours a week by age fourteen, and up and up, until by the age of twenty they were practicing—that is, purposefully<sup>58</sup> and single-mindedly<sup>59</sup> playing their instruments with the intent<sup>60</sup> to get better—well over thirty hours a week. In fact, by the age of twenty, the elite performers had each totaled ten thousand hours of practice. By contrast, the merely good students had totaled eight thousand hours, and the future music teachers had totaled just over four thousand hours.

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<sup>50</sup> an expert or specialist in psychology, the study of the human mind and its functions, especially those affecting behavior

<sup>51</sup> Participating in

<sup>52</sup> a discussion characterized by energy, passion, and enthusiasm

<sup>53</sup> **Innate** (adjective): originating naturally; inherent, from birth

<sup>54</sup> Violin players

<sup>55</sup> A musician who performs a solo

<sup>56</sup> Simply

<sup>57</sup> Become obvious

<sup>58</sup> **Purposefully** (adverb): in a clear, meaningful way

<sup>59</sup> with only one aim or purpose; in a very determined and focused way

<sup>60</sup> Intention



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- [4] Ericsson and his colleagues<sup>61</sup> then compared amateur<sup>62</sup> pianists<sup>63</sup> with professional pianists. The same pattern emerged.<sup>64</sup> The amateurs never practiced more than about three hours a week over the course of their childhood, and by the age of twenty they had totaled two thousand hours of practice. The professionals, on the other hand, steadily increased their practice time every year, until by the age of twenty they, like the violinists, had reached ten thousand hours.
- [5] The striking<sup>65</sup> thing about Ericsson's study is that he and his colleagues couldn't find any "naturals," musicians who floated effortlessly<sup>66</sup> to the top while practicing a fraction of the time their peers did. Nor could they find any "grinds," people who worked harder than everyone else, yet just didn't have what it takes to break the top ranks. Their research suggests that once a musician has enough ability to get into a top music school, the thing that distinguishes<sup>67</sup> one performer from another is how hard he or she works. That's it. And what's more, the people at the very top don't work just harder or even much harder than everyone else. They work much, *much* harder.
- [6] The idea that excellence at performing a complex<sup>68</sup> task requires a critical<sup>69</sup> minimum level of practice surfaces<sup>70</sup> again and again in studies of expertise.<sup>71</sup> In fact, researchers have settled on what they believe is the magic number for true expertise: ten thousand hours.
- [7] "The emerging picture from such studies is that ten thousand hours of practice is required to achieve the level of mastery associated with being a world-class expert—in anything," writes the neurologist<sup>72</sup> Daniel Levitin. "In study after study, of composers, basketball players, fiction writers, ice skaters, concert pianists, chess players, master criminals, and what have you, this number comes up again and again. Of course, this doesn't address why some people get more out of their practice sessions than others do. But no one has yet found a case in which true world-class expertise was accomplished in less time. It seems that it takes the brain this long to assimilate<sup>73</sup> all that it needs to know to achieve true mastery."
- [8] This is true even of people we think of as prodigies.<sup>74</sup> Mozart,<sup>75</sup> for example, famously started writing music at six. But, writes the psychologist Michael Howe in his book *Genius Explained*,
- "...by the standards of mature composers, Mozart's early works are not outstanding. The earliest pieces were all probably written down by his father, and perhaps improved in the process. Many of Wolfgang's childhood compositions, such as the first seven of his concertos<sup>76</sup> for piano and orchestra, are largely arrangements of works by other composers. Of those concertos that only contain music original to Mozart, the earliest that is now regarded as a masterwork (No. 9, K. 271) was not composed until he was twenty-one: by that time Mozart had already been composing concertos for ten years."

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<sup>61</sup> People who work together

<sup>62</sup> A person who is learning or new to an activity; not a professional

<sup>63</sup> Piano players

<sup>64</sup> Became obvious

<sup>65</sup> Most important

<sup>66</sup> To advance their skills with minimal effort

<sup>67</sup> Makes them different

<sup>68</sup> Difficult

<sup>69</sup> **Critical** (adjective): urgently needed; absolutely necessary

<sup>70</sup> Comes up

<sup>71</sup> **Expertise** (noun): skill, know-how

<sup>72</sup> a medical specialist who studies the brain and nervous system

<sup>73</sup> **Assimilate** (verb): to learn and understand something completely


<sup>74</sup> a person, especially a young one, endowed with exceptional qualities or abilities

<sup>75</sup> Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was a child prodigy and prolific composer who produced over 800 works in nearly every Western classical genre. He's considered one of the greatest composers in history, alongside Bach and Beethoven.

<sup>76</sup> a musical composition, especially one on a relatively large scale

- [9] The music critic Harold Schonberg goes further: Mozart, he argues, actually "developed late," since he didn't produce his greatest work until he had been composing for more than twenty years.

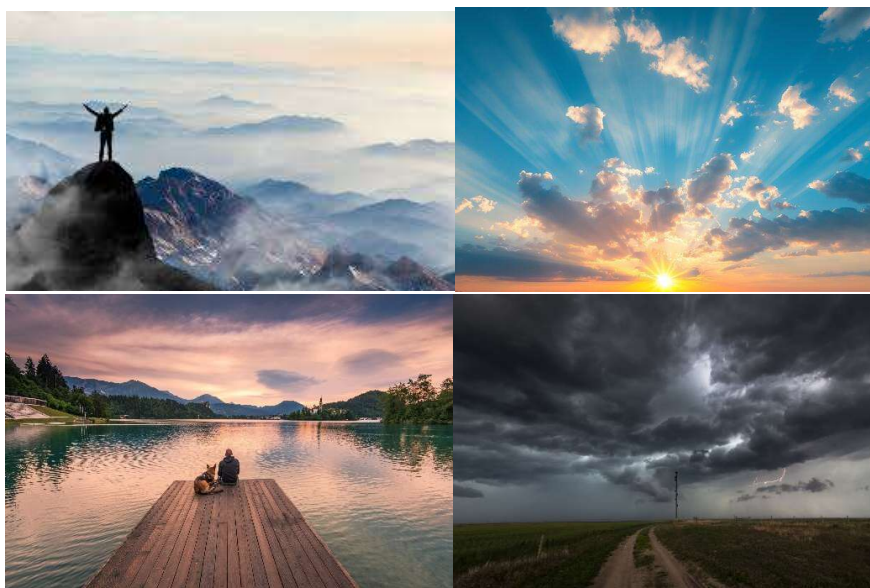
**Task 3: Excerpt from Outliers: The Story of Success**

1. **Personal Response:** What does success look like to you? How do you know whether or not you are successful? Do you think intelligence is influenced more by having natural ability or by working hard? Why or why not? Do you think anyone who spends 10,000 hours practicing a skill will master it? Why or why not?
2. **Central Idea:** What is the central idea of the excerpt? How does Gladwell introduce the idea and then develop it over the course of the text? Write 2-3 sentences explaining the central idea and its development. Be sure to cite specific evidence from the text to support your analysis.  
 *Hint: The central idea of a text is the most important or central thought that unifies elements of a text. We can identify the central idea of a text by reading the text carefully and underlining or highlighting the main points and supporting details to determine the simple topic of the text. Then, determine the author's purpose for writing the text (to persuade, to inform, to argue, to describe, etc.) and what the author is saying about the topic.*
3. **Research:** *Outliers: The Story of Success* argues that high achievers are made through hard work and dedication, not necessarily qualities they are born with. Research talent and find specific examples of how success was achieved through practice or innate talent. Identify external and internal forces that encourage people to achieve. Identify personal characteristics that are crucial for achievement. Do you believe talent is innate or achieved? Write an argument with a clear claim, evidence, and thorough analysis that establishes your position on what you think is necessary for achievement? Your response should be a well-developed paragraph of 200-250 words.

## Culminating Assignment

### Part 1: Setting SMART Goals

1. Look at the four pictures below. Which one best represents your feelings towards your academic success this upcoming school year? In 1-2 sentences, explain why you chose this picture and how it relates to your perspective of success. Do you think your perspective might change throughout the school year? Why or why not? What might cause it to change?



2. What are three (3) of your strengths in school? What are three (3) of your weaknesses in school? These can be academic subjects, student skills, social aspects, etc.
3. Research shows us that the brain is flexible, and the connection between neurons can actually change through learning, practice, and experience. Thus, our abilities, talents, and intelligence can be developed. This means our motivation and intelligence can actually grow. Students' perspectives or mindset fall into two categories: FIXED MINDSET and GROWTH MINDSET. Look at the definitions of each below. In 1-2 sentences, explain which do you think you can be categorized as and why?
  - **Fixed Mindset:** Students believe that their qualities such as talent or intelligence are fixed. (This means that those qualities are innate or that you are born with it.) They often spend time documenting their achievements, talents, skills, or intelligence instead of trying to develop them or have them grow.
  - **Growth Mindset:** Students believe that their qualities such as talents or intelligence can be developed or can evolve through practice, hard work, use of good strategies, feedback, determination, and persistence. They spend their time trying to expand their knowledge and expertise.

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4. Goal setting is great practice, particularly for students, but it can get overwhelming at times. Finding structure to accomplish tasks and set objectives can become overwhelming. Using a system like SMART goals can assist in this practice. A SMART goal is:
- **Specific:** Make your goal specific and narrow. What do you want to accomplish? Why is it important? Who is involved? What resources will you need? What actions will you need to take?
  - **Measurable:** Make sure your goal and progress are measurable. How will you know you're making progress? How will you know you've achieved your goal? Are there any tasks you must complete before you can accomplish your goal? How long will it take?
  - **Achievable:** Make sure you can reasonably accomplish your goal within a certain time frame. Do you have the resources and time needed to achieve your goal? What do you need to be able to achieve your goal? How realistic is your goal?
  - **Relevant:** Your goal should align with your values and long-term objectives. How will achieving your goal bring you closer to your values and the things you believe in? Is this goal worthwhile?
  - **Time-Based:** Set a realistic but ambitious end date to clarify task prioritization and increase motivation. When will you accomplish your goal? Is it a short-term goal (a week or two) or long term (a year or longer)?

Think about some goals that you want to accomplish this school year. What will you do in order to achieve your goals? Come up with three (3) academic SMART goals that you want to work towards this school year.

- *Example: By the end of next month, I will commit to getting at least 8 hours of sleep each night. I will do this by turning off my devices one hour before bed and practicing breathing exercises to fall asleep faster.*
  - *Specific: The goal is to get more sleep, preferably the recommended daily amount for 13-18-year-olds.*
  - *Measurable: Having a set bedtime and using an alarm, set for 8 hours later.*
  - *Achievable: Organizing the student's activities and eliminating distractions make this goal achievable.*
  - *Relevant: Restful sleep is crucial for your brain and body to function at their highest level, increasing your ability to concentrate and potentially academic performance.*
  - *Time-based: The routine gives the student time to get to know their schedule and work it to account for additional sleep.*

## **Part 2: Letter to Your Future Self**

Write a letter to your future self at 18 years old (so, you are writing as an incoming freshman to yourself as a graduating senior in high school; you will get these letters back before you graduate). Format your letter correctly (salutation, body, closing, signature), and be honest with yourself. Write as much as you can—the more you include, the more fun you'll have looking back as a senior. You and your teacher (don't worry, we're not judging you) are the only ones who will read these letters, so don't be afraid to be yourself.

Start by filling out the flow chart on the next page by starting with one of the bubbles on the left (pick the one that means the most to you. Follow the flow chart (you can trace your route) and jot down quick responses on the notes page as you go. Once you come to the end of the flow, pick another bubble at the side until you have completed all of the categories. Use these prompts to help you organize your letter. Reflect on each category. In your letter, you should also describe who you are now—your current likes and dislikes, your friends and family, hobbies, extracurriculars and sports—and what is important in your life now.

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