

DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION ONLY

THE MONTFORT ACADEMY FOUR-YEAR WRITING PROGRAM

The objective of the four-year writing program at The Montfort Academy is to teach students to write effectively about important ideas. The highest achievement of the program is for select Seniors to write an academic, multi-disciplinary thesis combining the techniques of research, idea formation, experiment design, metaphysical and statistical analysis, analytical writing, and oral presentation. Upon graduation, all students will be ready to leave Montfort confident and prepared to engage the world with a polished written and oral voice and a clearly organized mind.

The following subordinate objectives are critical to support this main objective:

- To teach proper grammar through studies in both English and Latin.
- To expose students to great English language prose and analytical writing by listening, recitation, and transcription.
- To ensure students can write proper sentences, and then assemble those sentences into proper paragraphs with topic sentences and support.
- To teach the proper construction of a critical essay and then ensure students can write such an essay through practice, receiving and providing comments and questions, and rewriting.
- To understand the concepts of textual analysis, assertion, and support in order that essays may be materially effective and valuable as well as technically competent.
- To expose students to and have the practice other forms of writing such as poetry, journaling, creative, and technical (lab notebook and reports) writing.
- To teach the techniques of proper research, including investigation and use of primary and secondary sources, citations, foot- and endnotes, and bibliographies, and the construction and execution of a proper research paper.
- For senior honors students, to teach the process of formulating, testing, and reporting on a thesis statement in a particular area: to research current thought in a particular area and from that research posit a thesis statement to be tested, analyzed, and reported both orally and in written form.

Responsibility for the success of the The Montfort Academy's writing program will reside with the Headmaster and the Writing Program Coordinator, whose goals and evaluations will according reflect the programs goals and objectives.

Freshman Year

The objective of the 9th grade writing program is to ensure students have a solid foundation in the fundamentals of English grammar and language and to work on correct sentence structure and strong paragraph and short essay writing. Students will be taught to understand and appreciate the relationships that exist between words, sentences and paragraphs. This is done primarily in the Composition and Latin classes, but also in coordinated assignments in Literature, History, Theology, Chivalry/Christian Womanhood, and Biology.

Students will develop fluency in the organization of words, rules, and methods. They will explore all aspects of the writing process: brainstorming, outlining, writing, and revising. Students will develop an appreciation for the systematic foundation of language, specifically English. They will be encouraged not just to appreciate linguistic beauty and effectiveness, but also to analyze why certain writing is considered beautiful and effective. Through such analysis, they will develop the skills to improve their own writing abilities. In addition to learning the foundational rules of the English language, students

will think critically and creatively by crafting well-formulated and well-reasoned essays. By approaching language first from the level of the sentence, then progressing to the paragraph, and ultimately the essay, they will learn to write properly, clearly, and effectively.

Freshmen can expect to learn the foundation of grammar in their Latin class and then recognize and analyze those foundations in their primary and secondary source reading in their other subjects. The composition teacher will select passages from great writing that match the grammar being taught and have students read, recite, and rewrite those passages so students will recognize beautiful and proper writing and begin to practice mimicking it.

Freshmen should expect two or three short writing assignments per week in their classes, including one or two biology lab reports per month. Montfort's writing program coordinator will work with teachers to schedule these assignments among the various classes and provide rubrics for grading consistent with the writing skills being taught at that time in the curriculum. As in all four grades, the writing program coordinator must ensure consistency in application of the writing rubrics and the grading. Papers will be read and reviewed providing comments and corrections with the intent that the student will revise and improve them. Multiple revisions may be necessary. Students will be graded on the final product. Properly trained college interns will assist in the reviewing and grading papers in all grades. Consistency of grades is the responsibility of the teacher and the writing program coordinator.

Honors: Honors students in literature or history can expect to begin writing five-paragraph analytical essays by the second quarter of freshman year.

Sophomore Year

The objective of the 10th grade writing program is proficiency in the five-paragraph analytical essay. This builds upon the work done freshman year and is accomplished through assignments given in literature, history, and theology. Students will also be doing technical writing in chemistry class in the form of laboratory notebooks and reports.

Sophomore students should expect one or two writing assignments per week, depending on length, including revision work. They will also be writing one or two chemistry lab reports per month. Students use the texts they study in class to prompt analytical essays. Teachers will vigorously stress outlining essays prior to writing and students will be graded on outlines as well as final products. The structure of their essays reflects the structure impressed upon their minds through careful study of literary and historical texts, among other scholarly sources. Clarity in writing indicates clarity of mind, both of which are goals for all Montfort students.

Sophomores will also be introduced to other forms of writing including poetry, journaling, and creative writing. These forms of writing can be expanding upon by participation in the creative writing club which is also moderated by the writing program coordinator.

Honors: Honors students in literature or history can expect to write five-paragraph analytical essays weekly. AP history students will write a research paper as defined in the junior year writing curriculum, below.

Junior Year

The objective of the 11th grade writing program, in addition to maintaining and improving proficiency in writing critical essays in all of their classes, is to learn to properly research, organize, develop, write, and cite (sourcing, footnotes, endnotes, and bibliography) a credible research paper. This is done primarily in the American History class but is designed to be interdisciplinary, incorporating readings and ideas from their other junior classes, as well as works they have read in their Freshman and Sophomores years.

Juniors should expect one or two written assignments per week from among their classes, including revisions. They will also be writing one or two physics lab reports per month. They should expect to write longer analytical essays offering deeper interpretations of the texts they encounter. Revisions of

these essays are not anticipated and students should be ready to be graded on their first (and final) drafts. Additionally, juniors are guided through the research paper beginning in September. This project teaches students how to read, interpret, and engage with scholarly sources. They practice the skill of placing different thinkers in conversation with one another, thus synthesizing their own ideas. Assignments throughout the year will include outlines, annotated bibliographies, drafts of sections of the paper, and revisions.

All assignments in the junior year focus on a more comprehensive understanding and articulation of concepts and texts both in writing and orally.

Honors students in literature, history, or debate & rhetoric can expect to write longer analytical essays as well as a research paper.

Senior Year

The objective of the 12th grade writing program is mastery of analytical writing and continued practice in research and technical writing. Seniors are expected to have mastered analytical writing by twelfth grade and will be doing a lot of that in literature, philosophy, and theology. Seniors should expect to write at least one analytical essay per week among their various classes, as well as one or two lab reports per month in their respective science classes. All students will also write a senior research paper, during one of the quarters, building on the research skills learned in the junior year and culminating in a final paper and oral presentation. Honors students will embark on an interdisciplinary thesis, combining the tools of research and analytical writing with forming a new idea, testing it by appropriate means, and presenting their findings in both written and verbal format.

Senior research, whether in report or thesis form, involves more than just the completion of a thoroughly researched paper. During this project, students grapple with great ideas, the concepts that illuminate ourselves, our world, and our God. Students continue to practice writing effectively, but also gain the confidence to engage with other authors and to find their own voice. Throughout the year, students will present or defend their work in front of others and, in the case of the thesis, a small committee of readers consisting of Montfort faculty and staff. The research and thesis papers are independent projects. The entire senior class, meanwhile, encourages one another in camaraderie among young scholars and sparks debate between interested, energetic young minds.

Honors students in literature or history can expect to write longer analytical essays, a thesis, and further explore creative writing projects.