

## Welcome to Mrs. Skinner's Online 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Personal Essay Course!

Please take a moment to read through the following information about our course. This section is important to read so that you know what to expect in the weeks to come. You won't believe all of the things you will learn!

### Course Goals and Outcome:

By the end of our unit, you will...

1. Know the process of writing a personal essay.
2. Understand the three parts of an essay: introduction, body, and conclusion.
3. Be able to write a valid thesis statement and support it with details and examples.
4. Learn and discuss ideas for your personal essay with your peers and teacher.
5. Have published a full personal essay online!

\*A major goal of this 4<sup>th</sup> grade personal essay unit is to prepare students for the task of 1) learning and applying strategies for writing a personal essay, and 2) getting ready for the Common Core Standards assessment in 2014, when students will be responsible for writing a personal essay on demand on a standardized test. This online course will not only get students interested in writing a personal essay through group discussions and online tools, but will teach the thought process behind an essay and how to support an opinion.

For more information on the Common Core Standards, specifically for 4<sup>th</sup> grade students, please visit this [link](#).

### Course Communication:

Through our learning this semester, we will be communicating in a few ways. First, you will become a "member" of our course on Schoology. To do this, I will send you an access code that you will enter when going to [www.schoology.com](http://www.schoology.com) - you have already done this if you are reading this message, so great job! 😊

On our online course website, you will find that in each lesson, there is a discussion you will need to complete. Instructions for your postings will be located in the lesson for the day. As a rule, post your idea first, then reply to two other classmates – give a suggestion, agree/disagree with evidence, etc. You will see more ways to respond to classmates in the lessons ahead!

You can also communicate with me through a Schoology message. I will be conferencing with you about your writing project throughout the semester, through messages, online discussion posts, and more. If you ever have questions, comments, concerns, or would like to share special circumstances with me, please don't hesitate to send me a message!

### **Class Organization:**

Our class will run in the following ways:

1. You will have a writing lesson to do on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. Fridays are used for conferencing or independent work.
2. First, read through the Lesson Objective and Teaching Point for the day's lesson. This is the main bulk of what you will be learning for the day.
3. Next, do the Lesson Activity portion for the day. This is where you will be doing your writing, testing out ideas, and thinking through your work.
4. Last, go to the "share" portion of your lesson for the day. This is where you will write your answer/share your work/follow the prompt in a discussion forum, then respond to two other peers. Collaborate, learn from one another, and have fun!
5. Don't forget to enjoy the ride!

### **Technology Requirements:**

Please ensure that you have access to the Internet Monday-Thursday of each week. We can work around your Friday schedule if need be, as it is either a conferencing or independent workday. Any web browser should be sufficient – I like using Mozilla Firefox.

You should also have Microsoft Word for your writing composition. If you need assistance in uploading a file, there will be instructions at the time you need to do that.

### **Grades:**

You will be graded on the following criteria:

- 40% of your grade will be **prewriting activities**
- 40% of your grade will be **final product**
- 15% of your grade will be **writing conventions (grammar, usage, mechanics, spelling – GUMS)**
- 5% of your grade will be **participation**

Later in the unit, you will see the rubric you'll be graded on. For reasons of unneeded stress and worry, I won't share the rubric with you until you

understand the basics of the personal essay concept. Anything that is assessed along the way, you will be notified of with criteria for success.

### **Grading Scale**

A+	97-100	B+	87-89	C+	77-79
A	93-96	B	83-86	C	73-76
A-	90-92	B-	80-82	C-	70-72
D+	67-69	E	Anything below a 60		
D	63-66				
D-	60-62				

### **Late Assignments**

If you know ahead of time that you will be unable to complete an assignment on time due to sickness, lack of Internet or computer access, or other special circumstances, please send me a message as soon as possible.

If no correspondence is made, I will assume that you don't have the work finished on time. For each day an assignment is late, 5% of your grade will be deducted. This is a fast-paced course, and losing time due to a late assignment will affect the time allotted for other tasks.

*Welcome! Enjoy, have fun, and get started with your first discussion forum – introducing yourself!*