

Dear Honors 10 students (almost 11th graders!!!),

First of all, I am so proud of you for how far you have come this year. I have seen each and every one of you grow in your writing, speaking, reading and listening skills over this past school year and I hope that you will only continue to grow next year.

You have an essay coming up that you are going to write (your last in class one for me!!) and I wanted to offer you some insights before you dive in on that last hurrah.

-Many of you (well pretty much ALL of you at some point or other in your essays) struggle with using synthesis appropriately. You need to more deliberately tie your ideas together. For example, from one of your Frankenstein essays:

“Victor’s knowledge becomes dangerous when it leads him to think that consulting his fellow professors would be a waste of time because he is arrogantly certain that his efforts could never have an adverse outcome. When making a decision is it essential to involve others and make sure that it agrees with every possible perspective. As a result of his lack of collaboration, Victor fails to see the physical and mental deformities that could occur with the creation. Just like Victor’s experiment, similar results from cloning trials done on animals NPR has found that it is ‘clear that cloned animals that grow to adulthood may have unexpected defects, such as heart or respiratory problems that do not appear until later in life’ (Source). Creating an animal or human that could have permanent defects is decidedly unethical because it negatively affects another living being just for the benefit of science.”

This essay does several things very well. 1) It connects both the book and an article IN ONE PARAGRAPH. 2) It has clear commentary that connects the quote to the key ideas. 3) It uses good academic language.

There are several things that it could do better, though (remember this is ALWAYS the case with writing!)

- 1) “As a result of his lack of collaboration, Victor fails to see the physical and mental deformities that could occur with the creation. Just like Victor’s experiment, similar results from cloning trials done on animals...” Notice here how it does connect the book and the article. However, the quote/idea that is chosen doesn’t quite match up with the idea of collaboration that is discussed earlier in the paragraph. It matches the ideas of creation with creation, but if you plan to compare ideas and juxtapose them to prove a point, you have to connect the commentary that was just used about how Victor’s folly was in that he didn’t look to others to see what potential problems might arise to that SAME folly in the NPR cloning debate.
- 2) The commentary in here is going beyond the scope of the point made in relationship to the connection between the two articles. So, if you are going to argue that Victor needed to gain outside perspective, then keep your commentary clear and concise about WHY that perspective was needed and what consequences it could help eliminate—both in the novel AND then how it is shown in the article.

-Another element that needs to be addressed is your verbosity. Yes. You guys are indeed verbose. I am proud of the vocabulary you have strengthened over the last year. HOWEVER, you need to be very careful of how MUCH commentary you include. If in doubt (or even not in doubt... but just when thinking about it...) make it CONCISE, make it CLEAR, and make it have PURPOSE. Use your words in a way that will support your argument, progress your argument and contribute to your purpose.

-Dig deeper with your connections and your ideas. While keeping ideas clear, concise and having a purpose, you MUST go beyond surface level ideas. Many of you started to get better at this in your last few paragraphs and essay. However, you need to make sure and still do this, even in a time constrained setting.

-Apply your organizational practices to timed essays. This is key. You need to make sure that you are really organized and thoughtful ESPECIALLY with timed writes.

-Revise, revise, revise. My recommendation for the final is this: revise. Write a draft out that is organized (outline!!!) and then go back and spend AT LEAST 10-15 minutes reading and revising. Check your ideas. Bring your thoughts together in your revision.

Okay. So I always have more to say, but I am cutting myself off so as not to stress you out. Remember, you are all becoming great writers and the more deliberate and clear you are, the better.

Keep being awesome and know that I love all of you! I'll miss you next year. Don't forget to sign my yearbook 😊

Love,

Chelsea King