



Literacy at Hartford Public High School

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Problem Writing an Essay

The most common problems that students encounter with essays fall into three groups: the thesis statement, organization, and presentation.

Thesis Statement

- There is no thesis at all.
- The thesis is too general, or a truism.
- The thesis is too narrow.

Organization

- There is no sense of direction, no reason why one paragraph follows another.
- There are few, or inadequate transitions.
- There are too many generalizations, and too little support for them.
- The introduction or conclusion is weak, or one simply repeats the other.

Presentation

- The essay is poorly set out, with inadequate space for the instructor's comments.
- There are frequent typos or misspelled words.

When your students write for you, they should have a clear sense of what you expect from them. Discuss with your classes exactly what you will be looking for in their responses.

If you share with your students a rubric that you will use when evaluating their work, they will have a clear sense of what you are looking for in their writing. Grades do not drop from the sky, as many students seem to believe; rather, grades result from the work produced by the students—work that is judged by standards that students should be made aware of.

It is important that students internalize our expectations for their written work. Letting our expectations be known is one way to ensure this.

Using Roots to Increase Vocabulary

The following story is an interesting exercise in using roots and prefixes. As you read the text, notice how many common words contain elements that could help our students grasp unknown vocabulary. We could help our students by making them aware of those elements in words that can help unlock meaning.

Uni Heliodies [two parts, one word], as **Ego** was ambulating on the **arena** by the **aqua**, **Ego** **spectated** a **xeno** looking **piscis** jumping into and **exo** of the **hydro**. He was very **macro** and **chromful**. **Post** observing this **piscis** from **tele** away for some **chrone**, **Ego** decided to take a closer **spectro** at this barbarous fauna. He kept **volving** and **gyrating** as if he were trying to **choreo**.

When this **ichthyofauna** saw me, he **tachly ex-ambulated** [reverse the order for the English translation] of the **aqua** and started a dialogue with me. He told me that his **nomenclature** [nomen] was **Iktho**. **Ego** tried to **port** on a discussion with him, but **Iktho** was just too **loquacious**. He asked me to show him the **ortho** way to **choreo**. **Ego** told him **Ego** didn't **cognito** how to teach an [a] **ichthyomorph** the art of **choreoing**, especially a **tripoded**, **duocraned mono**. **Iktho** got very angry and **versed circum** and **retrogressed** [two words, reverse their order] into the **halo aqua** where he **symbiosed** [two words, reverse their order] with other **macrofauna** [plural] of his **biosphere**.

Post that, **Iktho** stayed **hypo** the **hydro** during the **diem** and came **exo** of the **aqua** only at **nox** so no **anthropo** could catch **vista** of his **ichthyoid** appearance doing his version of the **tacho** step with [a] **oligo-brady** steps for variety.

It was a **xeno vista** for **andros**, **gynos**, and **peds** (Gk.) from their **cryptic alto-locus** on the hill **super scoping** the scene **sub** them. **Iktho's scintillating lunar** exploits with his **pseudopods** were the main topics of **pan** the **major** discussions in the **acropolis**.

Well, this is the **finis** of our **micro** story, but we wish **Iktho** only **bene** and that no **mono** has any **maledictions** for our **micro** friend with the **macro cardia**. Long **viva** **Iktho**, a **veritable hydro-terrestrial ichthyofauna**; a **unique piscis** among **multi pisces**.