



**Cottey College
&
the Cottey College English
Department
present**

Write On, Sister

**Winners of the
Merry Ann DeVaney Sauls
Academic Writing Contest
2024**

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About the Contest

The Merry Ann DeVaney Sauls Academic Writing Contest was developed to enhance the prestige of academic writing in the disciplines at Cottey College. The contest is financed through a generous endowed fund established by Merry Ann DeVaney Sauls, a 1959 Cottey graduate. Ms. Sauls sees writing as fundamentally important to success in any endeavor and sponsors the writing contest as a way of furthering that vision.

All students are invited to submit writing composed in Cottey courses to the contest. Internal judges from Cottey College perform initial assessments of the pieces. Then, finalist external judges, typically professors or professionals in the relevant disciplines at other colleges, universities, and workplaces, rank the best pieces in each category.

The winners are honored at a public ceremony. The full texts of the winning pieces are shared online via this publication.

For more information about the contest and its past winners, visit the [contest website](#).

The co-sponsors of the contest, Dr. Jonathan Green and Dr. Sarah Polo, wish to thank the internal and external judges for their service and commitment to recognizing exemplary student writing.

Contest Judges

External Judges

Dr. Julie Perino

Caroline Dohack

Joaquin Gavilano

Internal Judges

Dr. Trisha Stubblefield

Dr. Kathy Pivak

Dr. Sarah Polo

Dr. Claire Mills

Dr. Jon Green

Dr. Sarah Quick

Dr. Sandy Chaney

Dr. Carol Clyde

Professor Laura Chaney

Professor Abby Daleki

Dr. Carmen Bourbon

Dr. Jorge Dioses

Introductory Writing

2nd Place:

Catherine Buller, “Audience: Modes and Word Choice Make a Difference”

There are many articles that have the same topics but differ in so many ways depending on the audience of their text. Who an author's audience is can change how they want their text to be perceived. Authors can use different modes and word choices to depict who they want their audience to be. Both texts that will be referenced in this paper are on topics about youth psychology. The two texts that I will be analyzing have similar topics but have separate audiences using modes differently and difference of word choice.

The first text is a scholarly article by Adriana Pastore, Giovanni de Girolamo, Silvio Tafuri, Aldo Tomasicchio, and Francesco Margari titled “Traumatic Experiences in Childhood and Adolescence: a Meta-Analysis of Prospective Studies Assessing Risk for Psychosis”. The article was published in the journal *European Child & Adolescent Psychiatry* in June of 2020. The article uses the research compiled from twenty-three other scholarly articles that the authors went over and selected very carefully. All of the articles were over the risk of psychosis from childhood trauma. They look for specific types of trauma, such as parental death, bullying by peers, or being mistreated by an adult. The article also mentions that other factors may also affect the risk of developing psychosis. For instance, the age of exposure, the amount of times the trauma occurred and genetic variables can all affect the risk of psychosis. The authors used this information in their article to compare the results to see if there was a risk for developing psychosis after experiencing trauma during childhood.

The second text is an infographic made by *Mental Health America* titled “Youth Mental Health: Emotions Matter”. The infographic starts by talking about how everyone experiences emotions and sometimes people struggle to deal with their emotions in a positive way. Then it goes into how children have to deal with real world problems everyday. The infographic gives examples and statistics of situations that kids have to experience at home, such as 2.2 million kids have a parental unit die, 5 million kids feel like their family struggles to get food, and 7.7 million kids have lived with someone with a substance abuse problem (*Mental Health America*). Next it explains how these problems can cause kids to act out, which eventually leads to the kids being disciplined in a way that is not beneficial. The infographic ends with talking about how being supportive and teaching children and adolescents to cope with their emotions in a healthy way can change

their lives. The infographic is about how kids and teens deal with real world problems everyday and it's important for them to learn how to cope with negative emotions, so they can lead a happy and successful life.

First to start off talking about the different audiences for each of the texts. The audience for the article "Traumatic Experiences in Childhood and Adolescence" is psychology professionals and psychiatrists for children and teens. The article was produced to inform these professionals on research that has been done, so that it can help them in their jobs. This information is not something that everyone needs to know to carry out their daily lives. It is important information to only a certain group of people. For the infographic "Youth Mental Health: Emotions Matter" the audience is for the general public. Anyone that looks at the infographic can easily comprehend the message behind it. The infographic can be useful for people that read it, but not in the same way the scholarly article used. For the infographic people use it to understand the basics of what is happening and how to help children and adolescents. While the scholarly article is more specific to one topic that goes into a lot of details. Both articles are on topics about mental health in youth, but their audiences are different.

The two texts use the modes in different ways to appeal to separate intended audiences. For example, the scholarly article used the visual mode by adding in graphs and tables. This shows that the scholarly article is meant for people that know how to understand the graphs and tables. While the infographic used lots of color and drawn pictures of people and items. When people see the pictures on the infographic they immediately know what the picture is there for. People do not have to try and decipher the picture like a person would when looking at a graph in a scholarly article. Another thing is that a whole lot of color is not used in scholarly papers like it is used in everyday life. In both texts the visual mode is used, but they are used in different ways depending on the audience. Another mode that was used was the spatial mode. For the scholarly article the spatial mode is used for the layout of the paper. Every scholarly article has a similar layout with similar sections in the paper, which can make a scholarly article easily identifiable. For the infographic the spatial mode is used in more ways compared to the scholarly article. For instance, the spatial mode is needed for separating sections, placement of the words and pictures and the placement of the title and subheadings. It is important to have good spatial awareness when creating an infographic, so it is appealing to the eye and easily readable. The spatial mode is very important for both of the texts in how they are presented to the audience. The way things can be an indicator for who the intended audience is supposed to be.

Word choice can affect the intended audience because some texts require the reader to have a greater understanding of the topic before viewing the text. For the scholarly article the authors expect the readers to be psychology professionals, so they use words that may not be understood by everyday people. For example, in "Traumatic Experiences in

Childhood and Adolescence” it states “The experience of psychosocial stress early in life may also contribute to the diathesis for psychosis by accentuating the vulnerability state” (Pastore et al. 225). This shows that the words that the author chooses to use may not be familiar to those outside of the psychology field. For professionals in the psychology field these sentences would make sense, but for everyday people it may be hard to comprehend. On the other hand, the infographic uses words that everyday people can understand. The authors chose to make the infographic so that anyone who needs it would be able to understand the infographic. The scholarly article used more words related to the psychology profession, whereas the infographic made it so that any person can comprehend their work. This shows that word choice does matter when thinking about the intended audience.

The way modes are used and the choice of words makes a difference in who the audience is meant to be for the two texts used throughout the paper. The article “Traumatic Experiences in Childhood and Adolescence” and the infographic “Youth Mental Health: Emotions Matter” have similar topics on youth psychology but differ in their audiences. The way the modes were used in each text showed how they were made for different audiences. The word choices made in each text showed that a different level of knowledge is needed to understand each text. It is important to understand how texts can be on the same topic, but are intended for a different audience.

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Introductory Writing

1st Place:

Langston Riddle, “Palestinian Art and Resistance: A Rhetorical Comparison”

The ongoing Palestinian genocide and war with Israeli Defense Forces has brought about political discourse that is laden with misinformation, biases and stereotypes, and manipulation; popular news sources and media are focused on dehumanizing Palestinians and vilifying even the most peaceful resistance by Palestinian youth. In analyzing and comparing the rhetorical strategies employed by two different texts – a popular text and an academic text – one can meaningfully engage with this harmful rhetoric and foster a greater sense of empathy and understanding for Palestinian resistance. The popular text analyzed here is a TikTok video by Palestinian-Chilean artist Elyanna, who performs a somber homage to her fellow Palestinians, written after the beginning of the 2023 Israeli-Palestinian war and subsequent genocide. Elyanna performs this song as a means of evoking sorrow and grief for those impacted by the genocide, and she means to inspire action and provoke change-affecting outrage in her audience of TikTok users and supporters of the Palestinian cause. The academic text – an academic journal article by Ruba Salih and Sophie Richter-Devroe, titled “Cultures of Resistance in Palestine and Beyond: On the Politics of Art, Aesthetics, and Affect” – explores similar themes by way of activism and resistance in Palestinian art, music, graffiti, public performances, etc. Published in 2014 during the Arab Spring uprisings, the authors use their academic qualifications in Palestinian studies to educate their mostly academic audience on the political and cultural nuances of art and aesthetics. Though the popular text and academic text have remarkably contrasting approaches to the use of modalities in their rhetoric, both texts employ strong rhetorical usages of pathos to evoke emotion, sympathy, and understanding of the Palestinian resistance.

The first and central point of comparison between the two texts lies in the usage of rhetorical modalities, in which Elyanna’s text employs multiple modalities while Salih and Richter-Devroe only utilize one. Elyanna utilizes a text modality in the form of English and Arabic subtitles; a visual modality in the form of video and imagery projected behind her; and an audial modality in the form of singing and sound. Each rhetorical modality exercised in Elyanna’s video serves a specific purpose in persuading the audience. For example, the dual-language subtitles create a more inclusive and accessible viewing

experience, bridging the linguistic gap between different audiences and drawing her viewers in. The rhetorical effect behind this creative decision is a greater cultural understanding and appreciation of Elyanna's work. The visual modality serves a similar purpose in bridging gaps of understanding in the audience. Behind Elyanna are projected images of Palestinian women and children as well as images of the Palestinian homeland. By utilizing such images, Elyanna creates an overwhelming sense of empathy and compassion for Palestinian people, and she invites the audience to move beyond preconceived notions of Palestinian inhumanity and instead view them as a people who are suffering. Finally, Elyanna uses the audial modality to evoke emotion and convey a specific rhetorical message to her audience. Using a song and oral language versus that of a spoken or written language is a highly specific and persuasive choice, as songs can use lyrics, melody and rhythm, emotional language, and cultural connections to create a holistically more persuasive message. Furthermore, her tone and urgency are more effectively and clearly communicated using her voice. One can understand the message as grief-stricken and sorrowful due to the universal nature of musical tones. Her usage of multiple modalities serves to create a highly interactive, immersive experience, leading to a deeper emotional and empathetic feeling amongst the audience.

Conversely, Salih and Richter-Devroe only utilize one rhetorical modality, which is seen in written text. The academic text is entirely comprised of written text organized into easily digestible paragraphs with headings; there are no visual components to be seen. Salih and Richter-Devroe utilize a written text modality to not only follow the conventions of the journal article genre but to also be overall more persuasive to an academic audience. The academic text uses written language as a means of concisely and comprehensively relaying large swathes of information, and its organization and structure allow for the audience to deftly navigate its contents. A written text modality is a persuasive choice to a purely academic or research-based audience because of its logical and credible nature; however, incorporating a second modality – such as visual imagery – could be more persuasive to the audience. Because the academic text focuses on art, aesthetics, and Palestinian graffiti, including snapshots of a “[disruption of] established hegemonic aesthetic forms” could further elucidate the arguments of the text, making it more persuasive overall (Salih and Richter-Devroe 16). Utilizing a second modality could create a greater understanding and appreciation of Palestinian art and graffiti with the audience, as well as evoking greater cultural competency. An academic audience could be potentially persuaded by this even further, especially if they are an audience with an interest in art-based research and data.

While the two texts differ according to rhetorical modalities, the popular text and academic text both use pathos to varying extents. In the popular text, Elyanna wields an incredible array of pathos-laden rhetorical strategies, including emotional language and lyrics. This is seen most prominently in the lines “In the land of peace, peace is dead / and the world is

sleeping on a hurt child,” which refer to the atrocities committed against Palestinian children (Elyanna, lines 3-4). Additionally, Elyanna wields pathos in her facial expressions and gestures, as she sings with a bowed head, eyes closed, and a somber expression. Pairing visual cues with audial imagery, she evokes a strong emotional response in the audience, drawing them further into her sadness and sorrow. Her usage of her native language, Arabic, helps create a deeper connection between the author and the subject material, drawing the audience in as they realize Elyanna’s personal ties to the genocide (Elyanna, line 2). The audience resonates with Elyanna’s authenticity and desire to honor and respect her cultural heritage, and in audience members that also speak Arabic, she creates a strong feeling of community and mutual recognition. This makes her work overall more persuasive because it deepens the impact of her message: grief and solidarity with the Palestinian people amidst the ongoing genocide.

Finally, though pathos is more closely observed in the popular text, the academic text also employs pathos in the usage of personal quotes and experiences from the Palestinian youth interviewees. For example, Salih and Richter-Devroe seek to amplify the voices of Palestinian youth in refugee camps by telling the story of Katiba 5, a pluralist hip-hop group that uses music to express frustration with social and political woes. Katiba 5 members lament the more “classical” forms of political expression – such as political parties and elections – and instead promote hip-hop and graffiti as “the perspective of the ordinary people” (Salih and Richter-Devroe 10). The authors also include quotes from the celebrated Palestinian graffiti protest artist, ‘Ammar Abu Bakr: “[...] I would not be content to offer something in a gallery. Who goes to a gallery to see art? [...] What about the people for whom we came out to protest? The people we have belonged to since before the revolution?” (Salih and Richter-Devroe 17) These quotes inject pathos into the academic text because of their humanizing, empathic quality. They are not merely discussing Palestinian art in a removed, clinical sense; the authors center authentic voices of Palestinian youth who are affected by conflict and want to express that in art and aesthetics.

Readers are drawn in to the voices of youth in refugee camps, further persuading the audience as to the validity of the authors’ arguments about Palestinian resistance in art. Analyzing and comparing rhetorical strategies in texts across multiple genres and mediums is an invaluable skill, especially when considering the highly delicate and controversial nature of the ongoing Palestinian genocide and the rhetoric surrounding it. Readers can use these skills to gain a nuanced understanding of how political and cultural messages are made and presented and how current political attitudes towards the Palestinian revolutionary cause can be rife with misinformation, harmful biases, and political manipulation. Furthermore, by analyzing and comparing the rhetorical choices made in popular versus academic texts, readers can engage in meaningful discourse surrounding

various rhetorical strategies and how they create empathy and understanding towards the messaging of marginalized peoples and communities. Going forward, readers can use these rhetorical strategies to craft well-researched, culturally competent and sensitive arguments of their own.

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Academic Writing (Short)

2nd Place:

Alexandria Lay, “The Lost World of Congressional Violence”

When we think of our government we like to see ourselves as orderly and effective, the great envy of the world. This is far from the truth. We are a country built on the back of civil disorder and while our government was never meant to, in times of strife, it reflects this sentiment. In times of deep division, this feeling of hostility becomes particularly apparent, sometimes going so far as to enact violence. Perhaps the most obvious example was the spike in violence not only between the people but between the politicians that occurred in the 1830s to 1850s when the slavery debate approached its boiling point. This paper will examine similar deviant acts of violence within historical and modern politics and how this deviance is linked to group conflict theory.

Political violence has been part of America since the beginning. However, in theory, public animosity was never meant to disrupt Congress. Congress would organize the Formal House Rules and the House Rules Committee early on in its development. Both of these groups were meant to keep order within the House with similar rules and committees also organized for the Senate. These rules covered a variety of situations with several prohibiting “disorderly or disruptive conduct in the Chamber” (Johnson, 2021). These documents set the norm for the behavior of those in Congress. So when Congress can no longer follow its own rules it has descended into deviant behavior.

An ideal example of this is seen when we look at politics in the 1830s through 1850s. The country had become increasingly split on the matter of slavery and this led to brutal clashes not only between the people but between the elected officials. This would be an era where deviant behavior reigned supreme. The book, “The Field of Blood”, describes in detail just how bad things had become in state government when it discusses the Arkansas House: “In 1837, when a representative insulted the Speaker during debate, the Speaker stepped down from his platform, bowie knife in hand, and killed him. Expelled and tried for murder, he was acquitted for excusable homicide and reelected, only to pull his knife on another legislator during debate, though this time the sounds of colleagues cocking pistols

stopped him cold” (Freeman, 5). This clearly describes the sentiment of the time and the political separation that led to deviant behavior that included threats and violence.

These acts of deviant behavior extended well beyond the chaotic years before the civil war. In fact, one of the earliest instances occurred only a few months before the creation of the Formal House Rules (indeed perhaps one of the triggers for its creation). On February 15, 1798, Roger Griswold, a Representative from Connecticut, attacked Matthew Lyon of Vermont. Griswold was enraged because the House had failed to expel Lyon after he spat tobacco juice in Griswold’s face a month prior. Griswold attempted to cane Lyon on the house floor while Lyon defended himself with a pair of fireplace tongs. Although not unlike the conflict in the preceding years of the civil war, this too was an incident that had its basis in political separation and strife. While true political parties were barely off the ground, factionalism ran rampant and seemed to encourage deviant behavior amongst House members. Griswold was a steadfast federalist and hardline supporter of John Adams administration. Lyon, a Republican, agitated against the administration which he felt was overbearing and out of line.

One would assume that our government in the modern age has evolved past the point of indulging these deviant acts. However, one would be wrong to make such an assumption, as while the behaviors are considered deviant and are discouraged, they still frequently occur. In a 2017 interview former House speaker John Boehner recalled an incident between himself and Representative Don Young after a heated fight on earmarks. Young pinned Boehner against a wall inside the House chamber and held a 10-inch knife to his throat. This account is collaborated by Young himself. In another incident in 2007, in the Alabama state senate, Senator Charles Bishop punched Senator Lowell Barron in the head after Barron called him a “son of a bitch”. So such acts still occur and are indeed likely on the rise as we enter another era of deep political divide. In a 2022 article, *Time* magazine reports that, “There were more than 9,600 recorded threats against members of Congress last year, a jump of nearly tenfold from 2016, according to Capitol Police records.” (Bergengruen, 2022). With such a large increase in threats toward Congress, it shouldn’t be surprising that the climate between congressmen has followed suit.

But why do these deviant behaviors occur in the first place? In his 1958 book *Theoretical Criminology*, George Vold expanded on classical Marxist and conflict theories by developing the theory of group conflict. What Vold proposed was that individuals are “group involved beings” meaning they form groups based on similar interests and goals; the more similarities they hold with the group the stronger their loyalties will be to the group. It is by being a part of this group that the individual both influences and is influenced by the group. Most importantly, these groups are in a constant state of action as they fight for the interests of their constituents. This naturally means that when interests and needs overlap conflict can rise between the groups. When this occurs, Vold argues, the threat of

competing interests will increase the loyalty of an individual to their group. In other words, the harder one must fight for their respective group, the more ingrained that loyalty becomes. In Vold's words, "Nothing promotes harmony and self-sacrifice within the group quite as effectively as a serious struggle with another group for survival" (Inderbitzin et al., 691). Group conflict can be further compounded when a group is powerful enough to control things of consequence such as laws. When they are able to codify their values into law, groups who are in conflict with those in power are more likely to be deemed criminal due to conflicting values (Inderbitzin et al., 692).

Vold's theory allows us to construct a better understanding of why these incidents of deviant behavior happen but also why they are not always viewed in the same way. Each of these incidents displays group conflict. The group in this case is the political party. Like in the example of Griswold and Lyon, the origins of this violence were likely rooted in the aggressive tensions between their parties. Griswold supported the Adams administration's hard-line diplomacy toward France and military preparations. Lyon believed that preparations for war would eventually precipitate that war. So when these incompatible beliefs brought them and their groups into conflict it is unsurprising that it would escalate to violence.

As the violence increases the individual's loyalty to their party becomes stronger and the divide between groups becomes deeper. Vold himself noted that the more savage the fight the more loyal and self-sacrificing those involved would become. This leads to escalation far beyond even the more savage beatings leveled on the Congress floor, such as the case of the 1838 duel between Representatives Cilley and Graves. Unlike the other incidents we have looked at, Cilley and Graves held no ill will toward one another. As "The Field of Blood" states, "Cilley and Graves were pulled into fighting. Like most congressmen, both men assumed that their honor was bound up with the honor of all that they represented" (Freeman, 76). In the end, Cilley would make the ultimate sacrifice for his honor and his party, dying in the third round of the duel. But Cilley and Graves were only a microcosm of the coming civil war where the South, in an attempt to preserve the institution of slavery, seceded. An action that led to an estimated 620,000 dead which is "approximately equal to the total of American fatalities in the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, the Mexican War, the Spanish American War, World War I, World War II, and the Korean War, combined" (Faust, n.d.). Such large-scale violence on American soil shows not only the strength of group loyalties but the perilous and fatal dangers.

There is one aspect of Vold's theory that we have not looked at yet and this is the legal consequences of group conflict. The 1998 edition of *Theoretical Criminology* notes that group conflict is especially visible in legislative politics where groups lobby for state involvement in their group's disputes. The book states "those who produce legislative majorities win control of the police power of the state and decide the policies that

determine who is likely to be involved in the violation of laws” (Vold et al., 237). There are many instances of legal suppression of the minority in legislative history but perhaps the ideal example is the Gag rule. In 1836 the Jacksonian Democrats controlled Congress with a heavy majority. Also, during this time, abolitionists flooded congress with antislavery petitions which ramped up the hostility between the parties. In an attempt to silence the abolitionists the House passed a resolution that automatically “tabled” all petitions relating to slavery without hearing them (Struggles). This essentially gagged the minority opinion who were stuck with either breaking the resolution or finding loopholes (until its 1844 rescension). It is an excellent example of the suppression of a minority group and the internal hostility created between political parties through legal means.

George Washington once warned of the dangers of political parties, reflecting on the conflicts of his time, in his farewell address. He solemnly wrote that they would prove “to become potent engines, by which cunning, ambitious, and unprincipled men will be enabled to subvert the power of the people” (Washington, 1797). His fears were far from unfounded and, in fact ,were already in full swing when the brawl between Griswold and Lyon occurred only two years after his speech was printed. Vold’s theory of Group conflict offers a framework for the perhaps inevitable nature of political infighting and provides us with a better understanding of the acts of deviance that occur between politicians in government.

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Academic Writing (Short)

1st Place:

Langston Riddle, “Book Review: *The Partisan Gap*”

The Partisan Gap: Why Democratic Women Get Elected but Republican Women Don't. Elder, Laurel. 2021. *The Partisan Gap: Why Democratic Women Get Elected But Republican Women Don't.* New York University Press.

Women have seen significant political gains in the 21st century, particularly with regards to their all-time high representation in elective office following the record-smashing 2018 elections. However, despite these massive gains for women in electoral office, there persists a phenomenon Laurel Elder describes as “the partisan gap” in her book *The Partisan Gap: Why Democratic Women Get Elected but Republican Women Don't*. Elder defines this partisan gap as a disparity between the number of Democratic versus Republican women in electoral office – specifically, most women in office are Democrats, while Republican women form a much smaller and often-shrinking portion of women in office. This is further extended to women of color, who have “exceptionally high levels of Democratic partisanship” versus that of Republican partisanship (Elder, 2021, p. 16). Elder argues that the partisan gap is not a short term phenomenon; rather, it is a product of structural and electoral changes within both the Democratic and Republican parties, such as evolving party ideologies, like the Democratic Party’s commitment to gender equality and the Republican Party’s contrasting conservative and unsupportive stances on women’s issues; regional realignment of the parties, seen in the Republican Party’s dominance in southern states and the Democratic Party’s reign in the north; the intersection of race, ethnicity, gender, and partisanship as observed through the high number of lawmakers of color in the Democratic Party due to its stance on racial equality; and party cultures, such as the sustained commitment to recruiting women in the Democratic Party versus the individualism of the Republican Party. However, I was less persuaded by Elder’s arguments regarding the partisan gap and the importance of voting more Republican women to electoral office. Using the lens of total persuasiveness and contributions to the topic, I argue that Elder’s findings are interesting yet overall lacking and insubstantial.

Regarding persuasiveness, Elder's general arguments are sound and well-supported by fact. In fact, Elder uses a wide variety of tools to support her arguments, such as charts, graphs, and more qualitative methods such as interviews. For example, Elder uses both outsourced data and her own to craft useful graphs on the number of women in Congress over time as well as the percentage of women Congressional Democrats and Republications over time (Elder, 2021, p. 93-94). These graphs, and other figures throughout the book, quantitatively support Elder's claims regarding the descriptive representation of women in Congress, and they are incredibly persuasive in proving the prevalence of the partisan gap. Additionally, her strongest data comes in the form of qualitative interviews in Chapter 4 regarding party culture and the recruitment of women candidates. Elder interviewed a substantial number of qualified individuals, including "women members of Congress, women candidates, high-level congressional staffers and campaign workers," etc. wherein they described their first-hand – and therefore reputable – accounts of party culture and leadership (Elder, 2021, p. 119). Providing a wide variety of perspectives from both Democratic and Republican parties lends further strength and reputability to her arguments, which pulls readers in and establishes a strong ethos.

Despite the reliable and accessible nature of Elder's book, I argue that her arguments are overall unpersuasive and unfulfilling. Her work is data-dense, yet the core of her arguments is lacking. Certain claims are unpersuasive due to a lack of sources, such as the idea that, if women participate in state legislatures, they will be more likely to participate in politics on the congressional level (Elder, 2021, p. 87); other claims are unconvincing due to a lack of explanation or data, as seen in her statement that gender parity and equality in elective office are unachievable "without women's representation increasing in both the Democratic Party and the Republican Party" (Elder, 2021, p. 12). Additionally, Elder claims – again, without any evidence or data – that the views of Republican women are distinct from Republican men. Elder fails to elaborate on these "experiences, perspectives, and views that are different from those of Republican men" despite claiming she observed this in her interviews with Republican women (Elder, 2021, p. 174-175). She also claims that Republican women bring "fresh perspectives to issues facing American families and women" without specifically elaborating on whether these perspectives will be beneficial to women (Elder, 2021, p. 144-145). The lack of supporting evidence and explanation behind these claims severely hurts Elder's credibility as an author, and it takes away from her overall persuasiveness. I felt unconvinced as to the claim that gender parity and equality can only be achieved if more Republican women are represented in state legislatures and Congressional office.

Next, Elder's contributions to American partisan politics and specifically the representation of women within and across political parties must be noted. She succeeds in providing insight into an under-researched and underexplored aspect of American politics that current research is lacking. As Elder states, existing literature discusses other potential barriers to women's participation – such as "gender differences in political ambition; the challenges of fundraising; the power of incumbency in reproducing white male power; and bias against

women candidates by party officials, campaign donors, and voters” – but political party-specific literature is scarce (Elder, 2021, p. 10). Elder’s writing on the partisan gap and gender parity is, therefore, groundbreaking in this sense, and it provides a new, interesting dimension to the analysis of American partisan politics and, within it, polarization and women’s representation. Elder also tries to inject some form of intersectionality and gender analysis into discussions surrounding the partisan gap. For example, Elder recognizes that due to the intersection between racism and sexism in American politics, women of color “entered state legislative office after white women and men of color” (Elder, 2021, p. 70). By doing this, she acknowledges the multidimensional nature of partisan politics and women’s political representation and contributes further to the broader discussion related to gender equality in political parties.

However, Elder’s contributions to the topic end there; though she discusses intersectionality and the representation of women of color in electoral office, her additions feel like an afterthought. Along with missing discussion related to other critical points of intersection such as religion and class, Elder provides little to no political or historical context, and the context she does provide is purely regarding the representation of Black Americans within politics, specifically the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (Elder, 2021, p. 102). Furthermore, she does not properly explain why women of color are more likely to run Democratic as opposed to Republican, and any theories she provides regarding this subject are untested. Frustratingly, she states that “the strong performance of women of color is not limited to House districts [...] but extends to a broader range of political contexts” but does not give any elaboration as to what these political contexts are (Elder, 2021, p. 108). Intersectionality and the influence of race is an incredibly important concept in 21st century American politics; Elder’s lack of thought regarding such is a disservice to her overarching research, and it could alienate readers who have multiple intersecting identities and are interested in reading about women’s representation in politics. Furthermore, she makes no attempt to move beyond the Voting Rights Act of 1965 as the only context behind the representation of women of color in politics, and she does not mention other incredibly crucial contexts such as racism, Jim Crow laws, voter suppression tactics, or the effects the Black Lives Matter Movement had on voter mobilization and representation. As a result, her study felt distressingly incomplete.

In conclusion, I would not recommend *The Partisan Gap: Why Democratic Women Get Elected but Republican Women Don’t* by Laurel Elder because, while it does provide new insight about gender and political parties, it does not provide meaningful discussion on intersectionality and historical and political contexts, and her claims are frequently unsubstantiated. This book and Elder’s research could be useful for introducing unfamiliar Cottey College students or other community members with partisan politics and women’s political representation, as well as its relevancy to Cottey’s thread of women’s leadership. However, readers may have trouble agreeing with or understanding her main claim that electing Republican women would be overall good for women’s progress or representation beyond simply increasing the number of

women in office. Because Cottey is a diverse campus with women from many backgrounds and countries, readers might also agree her analysis of race and gender is insubstantial. Overall, while this book was not my favorite and I would not recommend it, Elder did well in advancing the conversation about women's representation in politics and provides a solid foundation for any future research done regarding this topic.

Academic Writing (Long)

2nd Place:

Finn McAdams, “Not-So-Mid Nights”

From the music videos and the photoshoots to Taylor Swift’s own words in the Instagram post announcing the album, *Midnights* promises one thing - to tell the stories of Swift’s sleepless nights. Whenever I think about the *Midnights* album, it brings to mind purple lights, smoky rooms, jewel tones and bloodshot eyes. The album dropped a week before my twentieth birthday, so I called it Taylor’s birthday gift to me - little did I know, she would later drop her version of 1989 a day before my twenty-first. To this day, though, I remember *Midnights* as a pure October night, sitting in Khloe’s bed and experiencing brand new Taylor Swift music for the first time with my best friend. Although we anticipated a 1970’s-inspired soft rock sound, based on the outfits that Swift wore in the aforementioned photoshoots, we were far from disappointed in the actual sound of the album. I felt that it reflected the range of emotions and thoughts that happen during my own sleepless nights.

“Lavender Haze” feels like sitting alone in a bedroom during a houseparty, hearing the booming bass of the music from several rooms away and trying to calm yourself down after an especially enraging argument. Self-soothing methods may include going off on a rant about how patriarchal expectations impact your relationship and smoking cannabis. In both pre-chorus sections, Swift’s claims are met with an echo (“Yeah, oh, yeah”), suggesting a second person, likely the “you” she speaks to throughout the song, mindlessly agreeing with her to either comfort or satisfy. The lavender haze that Taylor sings about serves a double purpose. It protects her and her partner from the scathing eyes of the outside world, which pushes a Madonna-whore complex (“The only kinda girl they see / Is a one-night or a wife”) onto their relationship, while also lifting them up and away from a state of concern about the way they are being perceived by the outside world.

Taylor’s talent for imagery shines through in just about every song she writes, but the usage of the color red in “Maroon” truly deserves a spotlight. At the time of release, it had been ten years since she had first described her love as red in “Red”. Now, in this song, Swift is referring to a relationship as it breaks down as “maroon,” a richer shade of red that suggests maturity. As Swift has grown and changed over the past decade, her idea of love has, too, and her lyrics reflect that. She makes several references to wine throughout the

song (“Your roommate's cheap-ass screw-top rosé, that's how”, “When you splashed your wine into me”), which is known to become more enjoyable with age. While Swift’s concept of love has matured, the difficulties and struggles that accompany it have not, and her experiences have not made those difficulties easier (“Ain't that the way shit always ends?”). She separates the relationship between its beginning and its ending, marking those parts with the first lines of the first two choruses (“And I chose you”, “And I lost you”). The lack of a middle section suggests to the reader that this was a relationship that began to fail very abruptly and it wasn’t long enough to be able to mark a time between the beginning and the end. The bridge marks the aftermath, with Swift reflecting on the relationship and the way it will remain in her memory - in shades of passionate red.

The lead single of *Midnights*, “Anti-Hero”, appears to take its place among Swift’s other satirical songs, such as “Blank Space” and “Look What You Made Me Do”, where she points out the scathing ways in which her detractors view her public persona and agrees with them temporarily in order to point out the flaws in their claims. However, this song stands apart from those songs in that the lyrics aren’t all entirely mocking her haters but show how Swift has begun to internalize their words. At the beginning of the song, she sings the first lines of the chorus (“It's me, hi / I'm the problem, it's me”) with the pop-y brightness that she’s become known for, but each time she repeats it through the next choruses and the breakdown, it takes a more tired and exhausted tone, like she’s being whittled down and has heard that she’s “the problem” often enough for her to begin to believe it. This song is also an example of what I believe to be a staple in Swift’s music - the use of upbeat production style to mask the bleak, reflective lyrics. This is the kind of song that you sing along to until you think a little bit too hard about the words that are coming out of your mouth, which makes you stop, and think “wow, this song is really depressing”. Just when you start to feel bad for Taylor, she catches your attention again with a “Hi!” and finishes off the song with a joyful little metallic percussive melody, leaving you to taste blood in your mouth and not know why it’s there.

I’ll be the first one to admit that I am a sucker for Taylor songs that are retrospective of her career and/or make references to childhood. “You’re On Your Own, Kid” is the perfect example of a song that does both of these, and I think that’s why this is one of my favorite songs off of *Midnights*. Not only does this song set up a metaphorical chronology of Taylor’s career, it also encapsulates the more general experience of growing up. When you’re young, you hold an unrealistic and yet hopeful view of love, which morphs and changes as you experience disappointments (“I waited ages to see you there / I search the party of better bodies / Just to learn that you never cared”). Through those changes, most retain some sense of hopefulness that they will find their one true love. Through the difficulties discussed in the song, Swift writes about the ways in which she changed the ways she coped with and viewed her experiences - for example, she sings about how songwriting

helps her handle life's difficulties ("Something different bloomed, writing in my room"). The chorus of this song ("You're on your own, kid / You always have been") is Swift, speaking both to herself and her audience in a way that morphs and changes each time she repeats it. At the beginning of the song, it sounds stressed, almost like coming to terms with the fact that the world is cruel and that you're alone in it but becomes more and more confident and optimistic as the song continues. Notice how she says "on your own" rather than 'alone' - the path she took with that diction is optimistic in and of itself and shows that nobody is ever alone in life. She strengthens this argument with the lyric "make the friendship bracelets" - telling her audience that they should become connected and invest in their friendships, therefore asserting that platonic connections are at least as important as romantic ones. I can't let myself talk about "You're On Your Own, Kid" without commenting on how powerful that lyric - "make the friendship bracelets" - is. It has had immense ripple effects on the world's supply of pony beads and elastic string, how Swifties but also nearly every fandom in the world connects with one another, and how Taylor connects in her own relationships. If there was any question about Taylor Swift's influence, I would point the asker to that fraction of a lyric and also give them a swirlie for being such a loser.

"Midnight Rain" bridges a gap between two break up themes that are pretty rare to find in Swift's songs - what I will refer to as the 'we were just different people' break-up story and the 'he was a complete disappointment, let me dunk on him' break-up story. The theoretical ex in this song does get the shout out "he was sunshine", but that line is among several which suggest that he was really boring compared to her. After all, this album isn't about the day, which is often considered to be a safe, mundane, and typical time of day - it's about *Midnights*, which typically symbolize change, transition, contemplation ("All of me changed like midnight"). Many of the lines which compare 'him' and 'I' follow a pattern of showing his lack of change or uniqueness in contrast to how interesting she is ("He wanted it comfortable, I wanted that pain / He wanted a bride, I was making my own name"). He offers nothing new to the relationship, and in fact can be seen as not just failing to encourage her in her changes but potentially holding her back in her metamorphosis. Overall, this song explores the dichotomy of the sun (or day) being a traditionally masculine figure and the moon (or night) being a traditionally feminine one, with the masculine figure representing conservative ideology in desiring a traditional marriage and the feminine figure representing innovation and progress in her desire to change and adapt.

If I was the kind of person to go on hot girl walks, "Bejeweled" would almost definitely be on repeat in my headphones while I did so. It is also the kind of song that kind of makes me wish that I had a slightly toxic ex so that I would be able to more closely relate to this song instead of having to go through all of the work to imagine it and place myself in that

position. I feel like this song is the flipside of the “tolerate it” coin, but instead of heaving a sigh when her partner ignores her and going to write about it in her journal, “Bejeweled” grabs the dude by the throat, gives him a talking-to about valuing her before getting ready to go out clubbing with her friends (“And by the way, I'm goin' out tonight”). The song simultaneously exalts self-love (“I polish up real, I polish up real nice”) and an attitude of suggesting that if he isn't interested in her, there are plenty of people who are (“They ask, “Do you have a man?” / I could still say, “I don't remember”). Like the diamonds and sapphires she sings about, she is telling her partner about how he shouldn't get too used to her presence in his proximity or in his life because she is a rarity who is appreciated by both herself and others. Her desire for him doesn't change the fact that he is undervaluing her (“Don't put me in the basement / When I want the penthouse of your heart”).

To me, “Labyrinth” captures both the feeling of being in love with somebody who you aren't sure loves you in return and the feeling of falling back in love with somebody who you are certain is not good for you. This dimensionality is reflected in her inclusion of the word ‘again’ in the chorus - “Uh-oh, I'm fallin' in love / Oh no, I'm fallin' in love again”. In these lyrics, ‘again’ could be defined as repeating the person that she is falling in love with or repeating the act of falling in love, both of which are very vulnerable positions to be in. The heartbeat-like sound in the production along with the repetition of the aforementioned line in the chorus at the end of the song is reminiscent of a panic attack. The repetition of the chorus mirrors the echoing thoughts that happen in one's mind during such an episode. There isn't quite a satisfying resolution to the song - it ends on a somewhat positive note with “I thought the plane was goin' down / How'd you turn it right around?”, but this line is at the end of the chorus being repeated, and is not unique to the rest of the song. Perhaps she has yet to escape the labyrinth that she spends the entire song in, forced to repeat the chorus ad infinitum.

The simple production which opens “Sweet Nothing” reminds me of a sweet little lullaby - the melody is like skipping around with your friends on a spring day. The lyrics build on this, with Swift kicking off the song with “I spy...” and sticking to a simple rhyme scheme throughout the song. What really gets me about this song is that it fits into the category of ‘my partner is my safe space’ which is just such a sweet idea and it makes me so appreciative of my own relationship, where I do my best to be that for my girlfriend and, in return, one of the roles that she plays in my life. I feel like it really sums up what a relationship should be, which is an oasis to comfort each other and protect each other from the trials and tribulations of life (“Outside, they're push and shovin' / You're in the kitchen hummin”). As one could probably expect from me drawing comparisons between this song and my relationship, this song is easily one of my favorites because it's just - well - sweet!

If I had a playlist titled “Taylor Swift Songs that make me feel like a bad bitch” (and I'm surprised I don't), “Glitch” would almost one hundred percent be on there. I'm not sure if

you believe in the multiverse theory, but this song makes me feel connected to the Finn in an alternate universe who is living somewhere glamorous or at least urban who is going out every weekend and getting into complicated relationships. By the way, this alternative Finn also probably has a pretty nice trustfund to be able to afford that lifestyle. This song feels like the darker, more moody cousin to “Paper Rings”, specifically the line “I hate accidents except when we went from friends to this” which directly mirrors the line that kicks off the song “We were supposed to be just friends”. Where “Paper Rings” celebrates the incidental nature of their relationship, it seems like “Glitch” laments it - there’s the idea of a ‘happy accident’, not so much a ‘happy glitch’. It kind of makes me think that this was written after a relationship went sour, so the way that Swift reflected on it was jaded.

Okay, forget everything I’ve said about other songs being my favorite - “Hits Different” takes the cake, runs away with it, and eats all of it in a heartbreak-induced fervor. I love how this song leans into the way that love kind of drives you crazy, a feeling which kind of takes on a darker shade when that relationship is over. Swift points at this pretty directly, asking, “...have they come to take me away”? Like I mentioned in “Anti-Hero”, this song takes advantage of her habit of using an upbeat, pop production style to mask the deeper feelings written into the lyrics. It is so honest in that it doesn’t try to make excuses for the behavior that she sings about nor is it poking fun at her feelings - it just confesses, simple as that. While the song discusses how difficult it is for her to get over this breakup, it does point out some of the ways that she tries - some healthy, some not so much. She writes about going out to clubs and bars, which tends to end badly for her (“I pictured you with other girls in love / Then threw up on the street”, “I slur your name 'til someone puts me in a car / I stopped receiving invitations”), and the way that she tries to listen to her friends (“Oh, my, love is a lie / Shit my friends say to get me by”) although it seems that she ultimately dismisses their attempts at support. This song doesn’t have a happy ending - she’s still in the same difficult position as she was at the beginning of the song.

The fact that *Midnights* is based off of the simple concept of ‘sleepless nights’ allows Swift to take it in so many different directions past the typical connotation of being kept awake by anxious or depressive thoughts - though those are definitely represented in this album. She is able to bring in the idea of being up at midnight because of her going out to clubs and bars, too, showing the complexity and dimensionality of the life that she leads. To me, *Midnights* summarizes that, even at the peak of stardom and wealth, life never gets easier - you just learn how to deal with it.

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Academic Writing (Long)

1st Place:

Gideon Hatt, “The Purdue Farms Story: Targeting the Perfect Audience”

If you Google “Perdue Farms” and click on the first link, you will be taken to their official website and storefront, recommending various products for consumers to purchase. If a consumer wants to know more about the company, they can click on the “About Us” section of the banner at the top of the site, taking them to a page entitled, “*The Perdue Farms Story.*” This page is meant to be a basic introduction to the company as a whole, with very little detail provided, hoping that their audience will take their words at face value and not investigate or simply give up before scrolling through several different web pages and PDFs. Perdue Farms strategically frames a story of their company in vague terms with hard-to-access verifiable data and explanations in order to assuage their consumers’ concerns about animals and redirect attention to consuming, while dismissing more serious objections to the industry as irrelevant and sentimental. This is consistent with Garrett M. Broad’s conclusions in “Animal Production, Ag-gag Laws, and the Social Production of Ignorance: Exploring the Role of Storytelling” of the wider animal production industry: “Americans are also surrounded by a symbolic environment of advertising and marketing that constantly trivializes and deflects animal suffering in the system, as it creates narratives about ‘happy animals’ and constructs cognitive barriers between ‘animals’ and ‘meat’” (5). Perdue actively participates in this construction of particular narratives, especially by seeming to build intimate connections of “family”, making vague claims of animal welfare without providing sources, and mocking opponents’ arguments.

Perdue foregrounds narratives about family and the environment while selectively excluding the animals they slaughter from their family and environment, trying to draw in consumers as intimate participants in a communal sharing of food while abstracting the company and consumers’ participation in a system of death. Throughout the first paragraph, Perdue directly addresses their audience by including a greeting - “Hello, and welcome!” - and using “you” to create a casual and personable tone, already implying a relationship between the audience and the company. They also use “we” to refer to the company as an abstract concept, implying a personhood behind the message. There is no specific author attributed to this webpage, so using “we” implies that the entire corporation has participated and endorsed this message, creating a sense of unity in the company for

outsiders to perceive, further emphasized by claiming this statement is “On behalf of the entire Perdue Farms family.” The use of “we” also works to diminish how nonhuman animals are involved in their company, as commodities to be killed and sold for profit, regardless of whether or not “we” includes those animals. Much of the audience will assume that “we” only applies to the humans who make up the company, despite Perdue themselves never clarifying who they intend to include in the “we” that they use. Including the farmed animals in “we” produces a more insidious reading: the corporation of humans speaks for the animals without letting the animals themselves hold any contradictory opinions or values, such as not wanting to be killed.

Perdue’s ambiguous exclusion and overriding of nonhuman animals’ places in their family is even more evident when Perdue explicitly mentions the word “family”. Their claim, “On behalf of the entire Perdue Farms family,” abstracts any individual under the umbrella of the “family” while not specifically defining who “family” includes. As I mention in the paragraph above, “family” could include every being involved in the company in some way, including the animals they raise and slaughter, but being vague allows consumers to forget that animals are being exploited and continue contributing to Perdue’s profits. Carol J. Adams posits that abstracting the animal under the term “meat” creates an “absent referent” that “permits us to forget about the animal as an independent entity; it also enables us to resist efforts to make animals present” (66). Perdue’s use of “family” creates a similar effect, completely erasing even the body of the animals that are exploited and ignoring individual thoughts, feelings, and opinions that may diverge from the larger company’s perspective. Perdue also claims that “When it comes to the food you feed your family, quality matters.” The animals who are exploited and killed are reduced to “food” as absent referents that do not even allude to the meat or the flesh itself, instead putting the onus of life onto the people who consume the animals. They also alter their use of “family” from personifying the corporation to directly addressing the consumers’ emotional connections. By using the same word, “family”, for two different groups, Perdue is likely trying to subtly equate the two groups, including you, the consumer, in the family of Perdue, and including the corporation of Perdue in each consumer’s family. Despite this narrative of community Perdue attempts to create, money and the continued existence of their systems of slaughter is their true priority, implying that the family of consumers is only a means to their ends.

Perdue wants to stand out from their competitors in the factory farming business, so they emphasize a niche of family friendliness and seemingly genuine care for their environment and animals. They claim to have “endeavored to promote animal welfare, source the grain that goes into our animal feed and thoughtfully tend the land in our care.” Several of these words are suspect in not providing a clear commitment to action and not offering specifications for what actions they have actually taken. The word “endeavor” means an

effort, which does not by itself prove any success at what they endeavor to do, nor do they define what counts as an endeavor “to promote animal welfare”. “Promote animal welfare” could mean anything from frequent checkups on the animals on their farms to having a yearly meeting with the higher-ups to address and dismiss concerns from outsiders. They also claim to “source the grain” they feed their animals, yet there is no accompanying adverb; they do not carefully or sustainably source the grain, they simply find and acquire it. They do not speak about the source of other food that their animals eat, only grain, which may or may not be their entire diet, but you will not know the details by only reading this page. The last clause of this sentence also uses incredibly vague language, claiming to “thoughtfully tend the land in our care.” Being “thoughtful” gives no indication to the actual treatment of the land or the animals on the land; you can consider something very deeply and still decide that there are enough convincing reasons to commit atrocities and do harm. Perdue also speaks of “the land” in very vague terms, so the audience can interpret the land to mean the physical ground and environment or it could be inclusive of the animals living on that land as well. They also claim they “are actively advancing our animal care programs,” again without defining what it means to “actively advance” and which “animal care programs” they are addressing. Where are they advancing to? What does it mean to “actively advance”? These are all vague placations of minor concerns their consumers might have, banking on the idea that most consumers will simply not do any more research and that they want to believe they are not contributing to harm. If their audience had more of an understanding of the industry, Perdue’s story would raise more questions than they answer, especially because they have made it difficult to verify all of their claims and find definitions.

One interesting piece of framing that Perdue commits to is the idea that they are an environmentally friendly company. Perdue claims to “prioritize green practices” and try to be “good environmental stewards,” again not defining the terms they throw out. How they “prioritize” and what their “green practices” are cannot be found on this page, but further investigation on other pages reveals that their recyclable packaging seems to be said prioritized “green practice.” Likewise, what being “good environmental stewards” means to Perdue cannot be found on this page, nor is there a conclusive section on other linked pages that defines what that phrase means. Their use of “environmental” buzzwords here allows the audience to feel less guilty about contributing to a harmful system, but Perdue’s “environment” does not even seem to consider animals. Their “environment” that they are “stewards” of only seems to include the physical land and plant life, especially as the most explicit example of their “green practices” is their packaging standards rather than some commitment to reduce the pollution produced before the animals’ bodies leave their custody. The words that they have chosen also evoke ideas of much more extreme action than Perdue actually practices, with some greenwashing obscuring how farmed animal

production cannot counteract the large-scale pollution and slaughter by simply using different packing materials.

Perdue does give more specific examples of how they “promote animal welfare” in their company, but they only give a small amount of information on this page, indicating where they have prioritized their marketing and possibly where they have succeeded in appearing to care while ignoring areas they have made less progress in treating their animals well. For example, they note, “Perdue chickens are fed a 100% USDA-certified vegetarian diet with no animal by-products.” Perdue started out solely producing chickens, but they now have many other types of animals, including turkeys, pigs, sheep, and cattle, so this raises the question of why only chickens are mentioned. It may even imply that the other animals they use are not fed a “100% USDA-certified vegetarian diet” and are subjected to the malnourishment and troubles that come with eating animal products. They also state, “We’re proud that all of our animals are raised with absolutely no hormones* and no antibiotics ever.” The asterisk corresponds to a footnote saying that “*Federal regulations prohibit the use of hormones or steroids in pork and poultry.” This is the only fact they clarify on the page itself, and it is one that is federally mandated, where they only improve on the bare minimum by not using hormones or antibiotics on all of their animals including the ones they legally are required to. Perdue could provide more concrete answers, possibly even offer explanations that paint them favorably, but any further information requires significant effort, which most consumers are unlikely to put in.

While Perdue does not outright lie about their practices, they frame the company as more empathetic and progressive than any mass-producing factory farm monopoly could be. Perdue claims, “Farming techniques that are now considered trendy have been a part of our practice for years – we just never felt the need to fuss about them.” Perdue manages to reframe the barely above-the-legal minimum of welfare they use for their animals as something their company has been doing for longer than others while leaving out details of how much longer or to what extent they are different and better than other factory farming corporations. Perdue also strategically picks words associated with femininity, buying into a patriarchal notion to dismiss women’s concerns. They call their techniques “trendy” as if people realizing that industrialization and mass production have terrible effects is a whim that will quickly die away. Trends are also strongly associated with teen girls and women following a sort of bandwagon rather than forming their own conclusions, dismissing any objections as momentary and trivial. The word “fuss” is associated with childishness, infantilizing the people who object to Perdue (and the factory farming industry as a whole) and removing any rational arguments against them. “Making a fuss” implies an irrational upset, a tantrum of sorts, often superficially grabbing attention, completely dismissing moral motivations. In this one sentence, they completely dismiss the validity of opponents’ arguments, but they hide this derision in other vague platitudes aimed at their true

audience: consumers who want to believe that they are supporting a company with the same values as them but are unwilling to do research that could disprove their optimism.

While Perdue may have gone slightly farther in their animal welfare than other, larger companies, the story that they have pushed on the “About Us” section of their storefront subtly exaggerates how progressive they are and purposely obscures details through layers of links. This exaggeration is only evident with outside research and time that most consumers simply are unwilling to commit to. Perdue provides just enough rhetoric to appease meat eaters who do not wish to contribute to more environmental degradation into choosing Perdue as their company of choice. Only by putting in the time and effort can we get closer to ethical consumption, so going deeper than the first “About Us” you see on a company’s website might be the first step. Looking outside of the company’s website for other perspectives is another step, and each step we take gets us closer to a fuller understanding of an issue, a company, and the world so that we can make more informed choices and take action.

Works Cited

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Kemmerer, Lisa. “Factory Farming and Females.” *Sister Species: Women, Animals, and Social Justice*, University of Illinois Press, 2011, pp. 173-85.

“The Perdue Farms Story.” *Perdue Farms Story | Perdue Farms*, www.perdufarm.com/en-US/perdue-farms-story/our-story-page.html. Accessed 3 Dec. 2023.

Professional Writing

2nd Place:

Taylor Rechenmacher, “Resume”

Work Experience

Shadow Experience

- Gynecological Oncology; Lan Coffman, MD, PhD; University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) Magee-Womens Hospital; Summer 2023
 - 15 hours
- Primary Care; Matthew Joseph, MD, Pharm. D.; Northern Medical Associates-UPMC; Summer 2023
 - 15 hours
- Emergency Medician Internship; Nevada Regional Medical Center; Spring 2023
 - 45 hours
- Radiology Observership Learning Experience Program; Allegheny Health Network (AHN) West Penn Hospital; Dec. 19-23 2022
 - 16 hours

Summer Health Professions Education Program

University of Louisville, June-July 2022

- Six-week summer program to explore careers in the Health Care field

Swim Coach

Franklin Ridge Fins Swim Team

Head Coach, Summer 2021 and 2022

Coach, Summer 2018 and 2019

- Lead practices
- Instruct swimmers and critique their form
- Coordinate and run meets
- Cheer on swimmers
- 115 swimmers Ages 5-17

Swim Instructor and Lifeguard

Franklin Ridge Estates Pool, Summers 2018- 2022

Baierl Family YMCA of Greater Pittsburgh, January 2020-August 2021

Allegheny Parks Department, North Park Pool, Summer 2019 and 2021

- Enforce pool rules
- Test pool water chlorine and pH levels
- Prevent injuries from occurring, and monitor patrons
- Teach kids to swim and have a fun experience in the water
- Group and private lesson swim instructor
- Ages 12 and younger

Education

August 2021-Current

Cotley College, Nevada, MO - BS in Health and Biomedical Sciences

Skills

- Reading Comprehension and Writing
- Active Listening and Learning
- Critical Thinking
- Complex Problem Solving
- Judgement and Decision Making

Honor Societies

- Alpha Chi
- Phi Eta Sigma
- Phi Theta Kappa
- Golden Key
- Alpha Mu Gamma
- Sigma Kappa Delta

Leadership and Volunteer Work

- Resident Assistant
- Student representative on the search committee for the Vice President for Academic Affairs/Dean of the Faculty Spring 2023
- Students Against a Vanishing Environment Co-President
- Phi Eta Sigma Vice President of Service- 2022-2023
- General and Organic Chemistry Volunteer Tutor -2021-current
- Franklin Ridge Fins Swim Team Head Coach- Summer 2021 and 2022
- Girl Scout Gold Award
- Girl Scouts of Western Pennsylvania Board of Directors Girl Advisor Committee (1 out of 3 girls in all of Western Pennsylvania)- 2019-2021

Awards

- Girl Scout Gold Award
 - Over 140-hour service project; I worked with an organization called Project Sweet Peas, and helped support families with babies in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.
- 2020 Distinguished Finalist for The Prudential Spirit of Community Award of Pennsylvania (in the top 10 high school students in PA)
- American Chemical Society MO-Kan Chapter Outstanding Chemistry Student Award
- American Midwest Conference 3rd Team All-Conference Team
- Women's Indoor Track and Field American Midwest Conference Champions of Character Team 2022-23
- U.S. Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches Association All-Academic Distinction 2021
- CAC Academic All-Conference Team 2022
- Cottey College XC/Track 2021-22 Rookie of the Year
- Gold Medal on the National Spanish Exam Level 1 American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (2018)

Professional Writing

1st Place:

Tobi Swearingen, “Halloween Lesson Plan”

(have teaching ***literacy strategies***: think-pair share, snowball, exit tickets, fishbowl, KWL chart, etc.)

- Commit and toss (snowball)
- Think-pair-share
- Exit ticket

Scared Senseless: Creepy Creations

| |
|---|
| Teacher: |
| Grade/Subject: 9th grade English |
| Duration: 3 day / 45 min lessons |
| Materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• English Journals• Writing utensil• Slides<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Canva: https://www.canva.com/design/DAFxYmBWWkg/_qan5vmL4G01eHydStAbLw/edit?utm_content=DAFxYmBWWkg&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=sharebutton○ Google folder: Halloween Lesson Slides DRAFT (1).pptx• Lined paper• Blank/printer paper• Colored pencils/markers• Computers or student chromebooks• Shared reading<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ “The Monkey's Paw “<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ https://www.kyrene.org/cms/lib/AZ01001083/Centricity/Domain/2259/The%20Monkeys%20Paw%20-%20text.pdf▪ Provide one to each student• Poem prompt worksheet (one peer group)<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Poem Prompt Worksheet<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ At least one per group, students may individually request one• Spooky/seasonal poems<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ "The Raven" by Edgar Allan Poe○ "Goblin Market" by Christina Rossetti or○ "All Hallows" by Louise Glück○ "Song of the Witches" from <i>Macbeth</i> by William Shakespeare• Seasonal images<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ |

- Spooky music:
 - Spooky Instrumental (for reading, group work, by request)
 - <https://spotify.link/omwhAyeQVDb>
 - Spooky Halloween Music (for moving activities, group work, by request)
 - <https://spotify.link/YDIeEdjQVDb>

Standards:

- 9-10.1A
 - Draw conclusions, infer, and analyze by citing relevant and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- 9-10.1C
 - Interpret visual elements of a text and draw conclusions from them (when applicable).
- 9-10.1C
 - Interpret visual elements of a text including those from different media and draw conclusions from them (when applicable).
- 9-10.3D
 - Read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, independently and proficiently.

Lesson Objectives:

1. SWBAT cite 5 relevant pieces of textual evidence to support an analysis
2. SWBAT verbally explain an individual analysis of a text read during this lesson
3. SWBAT read each literary text presented independently with 100% accuracy

Differentiation Strategies:

- Content
 - Will be presented visually on slides and on individual papers
 - Visual elements for examples and mood setting will be provided
- Process
 - Paper versions and electronic versions of (MOST) readings are provided (if requested)
 - Varied types of roles for group work is available
 - Opportunities to share...
 - Verbally to class
 - Verbally to Instructor
 - In written form
- Product
 - Free choice of themes and story telling
 - Multiple different forms to produce a product
 - Posters
 - Poems
 - Short Story
- Environment
 - Thought/mood provoking music will play during many of the activities within this lesson (volume will vary on activity and student request)
 - Groups will be able to sit anywhere of their choosing except behind the teachers desk

ENGAGE:

Day 1:

- Shared reading: **10 min**
 - "The Monkey's Paw "
 - <https://www.kyrene.org/cms/lib/AZ01001083/Centricity/Domain/2259/The%20Monkeys%20Paw%20-%20text.pdf>
 - Provide one to each student
- Commit and toss:
 - A question will be presented on the slides "What does Halloween/October season mean to you? Write in your journal. Then, write one word for each of your 5 senses (touch, taste, hear, smell, and see) each on a separate piece of paper" **(1-3 min)**
 - You should also participate in this.

- Play “seasonal” music as they work
 - (provide in materials)
 - Students should record both parts in their journals (the prompt, and each of the five senses)
- Then after time is up or everyone is finished, while staying in their seats, have them crumble up the paper and toss it somewhere in the room
 - Ask the students to not touch these papers until you say the word “Scavenge!” which you will say in the beginning of the explain portion of this lesson

Materials: shared reading “The Monkey's Paw”, English Journals, blank paper, writing utensils

EXPLORE

Day 1:

- Think-group-share (**10-20 min, student paced**)
 - Break the students into 4 equal groups (no more than 5 students per group).
 - Separate these groups with differentiation in mind:
 - Group 1 is: the vampires (very advanced readers)
 - ["The Raven"](#) by Edgar Allan Poe
 - Group 2 is: the werewolves (lower level/striving readers)
 - ["All Hallows"](#) by Louise Glück
 - Group 3 is: the gargoyles (level appropriate readers)
 - ["Song of the Witches"](#) from *Macbeth* by William Shakespeare
 - Group 4 is: the zombies (advanced readers)
 - ["To The Dead in the Graveyard Underneath My Window"](#) by Adelaide Crapsey
 - Each student will receive a poem based on their group and will find a spot of the groups choosing to sit together and first read the poem independently and then share with their group these prompts below (which will be presented on the [slides](#)). Have them elect one student to write their thoughts all down on the [Poem Prompt Worksheet](#) (provide one to each group).

Materials: Student journals, [Poem Prompt Worksheet](#), ["The Raven"](#), ["All Hallows"](#), ["Song of the Witches"](#), ["Goblin Market"](#)

EXPLAIN

- Have each student go and collect ONE of the crumbled papers, ask students to NOT grab their own if they can avoid it.
- Students will write a poem on another student's 5 sense paper, and the poem must include some sort of monster, 3 visual/descriptive elements (based on the senses), and a set/concrete mood/tone.

Materials:

EXTEND

- What opportunities will you provide for students to apply the content in a new way?
- Students will then exchange poems
- Students will have to write a short story based on the monster in the poem and must use evidence of some sort in the story from the poem (story must have same mood from poem and at least one same/similar visual element))
- OR
- (this choice is a presentation) Students will make a visual poster based on the monster in the poem they will provide evidence from the poem somewhere on the poster (front back)

Materials: Student journals,

| | |
|--|---|
| EVALUATE | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formative | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> English Journal responses Engagement Participation during crumble toss Participation during class discussions |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summative | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students poems Students scary short story |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflective | <p>How will you reflect on the lesson and determine what needs to change?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflection: Reflection Paper: Halloween Listening to feedback from myself, my students, and any possible outside sources Journaling/taking notes about positive and negative aspects of the lesson. Any data collected. Summative and formative collections. |

Key Terms/Vocabulary:

- Media
- Participation

(have teaching ***literacy strategies***: think-pair share, snowball, exit tickets, fishbowl, KWL chart, etc.)

- Commit and toss (snowball)
- Think-pair-share
- Exit ticket

Creative Writing

2nd Place:

Cora Neher, “Ode to Willa Cather’s Prairie”

Arriving in the prairie was as if arriving in another world. Gone were the forests full of young trees and wild undergrowth of my home, in their place were rolling hills of tall grass and a near cloudless blue sky that stretched an unknowable distance off toward the horizon. In the evening I wandered out under the fading sun along a high ridge that overlooked a charming green vale to find a place to observe the colors that were painted across the landscape. A generous coat of lovely pink blush and gentle orange marmalade glowed along the tips of the tall grass making them appear as if they were the bristles of some great paint brush. Among the hundreds of yellows and off-whites that commanded the plain –these bristles of the land’s paintbrush– I stumbled upon a curious flower. It seemed that as a reward for my journey out to the very end of the trail, I was offered a scattering of purple loosestrife –flowers with adorable clusters of violet blooms– which offered a beautiful contrast to the orange of the setting sun.

I had been many places before so I cannot deny that my natural inclination lies within the high forests and lakes –the likes of those found in Montana or Germany or Austria– but there was a curious life about the prairie. The likes of which I have rarely experienced. Forests, for example, have an old, wise energy cultivated over many long years and cold winters. Lakes whisper and conquer, rivers run and sing, brooks and streams laugh as they play across their stoney beds, but the prairie... The prairie is like a quiet roar. It is wild, a caged beast that –when allowed to flourish– has an odd sort of consciousness to it. Neither wise nor naïve, it seemed to possess an entirely different kind of life from that which I am so intimate with. A kind of life which both wishes to remain untouched by human hands yet also desires to capture all that enter its domain.

In order to understand this life I returned the next day. To my surprise, I was once again caught off guard as the night and day were barely alike. In the day I found myself following the same trail yet oppressed by the will of an unkind sun. A nocturnal soul, I was lulled into a restless slumber upon laying my back upon the grass. I had laid down in a spot near the scattering of purple loosestrife that I had found the evening before with the intention of writing for myself, but found myself drawn in by the warmth of the ground and exhaustion from sitting in the sun. In doing so –napping upon the grass– I experienced what I could only describe as a heartbeat. Putting my head against the soil on the slope of the hill I lost my sense of gravity and all of my focus shifted to my ears. The sound of life –a rhythm so

powerful that it set me into a daze– overtook me. My pulse slowed to match that of the ground, a resounding thrum that commanded my entire body.

It was only when my burning skin was no longer soothed by the kiss of the passing wind that I was summoned back to the confines of the house. But, as I began my trek, I found myself restrained by a gale –by the very wind that had carried me out to my mellow resting place– and its desire to hold me captive upon the hillside. I felt my body tense, perhaps instinctively sensing that desire, and soon found myself stubbornly battling it in order to make my escape. Yet, even after my flight, I was still drawn back that evening.

This time, when I returned, I did not adhere to the path. I ventured down into the grassy vale, accompanied by a small posse of my fellow humans –all of whom contained a certain spark of wildness– seeking a new experience from that which we had experienced but mere hours prior. In our wanderings without a trail, we listened for the sound of rattlesnakes hidden beneath the brush while admiring the songs of crickets, the buzz of grasshoppers' wings, the distant cries of the coyotes. There is no way to describe the experience of roaming wild over the plain, it can only be experienced by the person who ventures there alone and in good company.

Creative Writing

1st Place:

Gideon Hatt, “Voicemail”

Please pick up please pick up... Hm... I guess you must be sleeping since it's 3 am there...

...Oh! Ahem...

I want this to be the first thing you hear once you wake up:

My dearest Haruhi,

Daddy is so proud of you for getting into Harvard Law School! I just know you are going to follow in your mother's footsteps and become a great lawyer! She would be so proud of you too, knowing that you are using your beautiful brain to help people.

I do have one concern though... That Tamaki kid, I heard from a reliable source that he is planning on following you to Boston. He isn't planning on stalking your every move, right? I know you're getting married and I suppose he is a nice kid, but you need to be careful! He's just a man! You can't let him distract you from what you really want!

If he follows you to Boston, he'll get even more attached, and leaving him behind will get harder and harder. Living in the same home as him, with his flamboyant flirting, his rich people attitude, his vainness... You always said, "Dad, stop dancing around the house! Dad, you're being overbearing! Dad, please shave if you're going to wear that dress out before work! Dad, give me some space!" And yet you let a kid you met in a host club in high school dance around, get up in your space, and dote on you. You don't even let me dote on you, and I'm your father!

Being in a foreign country means you'll be isolated from a lot of people, so he could take advantage of that. You two will probably be the only people in Boston speaking Japanese and then you'll have to turn to him for every little thing! I know he's half-French, so he probably already speaks English and is rich enough to hire a live-in translator...If he can afford to pay his way into fluency, he can hold your ability to communicate hostage. I can't bear to think of you so dependent like that—you've always been independent and that Tamaki should never change that.

You, Haruhi, are the smartest and strongest and best woman I know. You can leave that guy behind if he stops making you happy at any time. I know you spent a lot of your childhood

cleaning up after me, and I will always be grateful because I know you care so much, even if you don't say it often. Tamaki...He reminds me of a younger me, the kind who was always tagging on to your mom, completely useless by himself. He might end up like me, just following you along, letting you take care of him until some tragedy befalls you. I bet you got tired of taking care of me when I was drunk or upset. I don't think you want to spend the rest of your life taking care of a man like him or even me, and with that guy, you have a choice.

As your father, I want you to know what you are getting into. This new chapter of your life at Harvard should be yours to do with what you want. Right now you might love him, but you might realize that he can't offer you everything you want, so you can walk away. If you really want Tamaki to come with you, that is your decision and I will love you regardless, but I will always be here at home if you have a change of heart.

I love you, sweetie! Please call me back when you have the time!

Writing in Foreign Languages - Spanish

1st Place:

Taylor Rechenmacher, “Lo que significa la vida para mí (What life means to me)”

¿Qué es la vida? Cuando uno busca la definición de vida en la Real Academia Española proporciona dieciocho definiciones de vida. Algunas de las definiciones definen la vida en términos de biología y ciencia, como, “cuyas tres funciones principales son la nutrición, la reproducción y la relación con el ambiente.” No me gusta el hecho que la definición dijo ‘reproducción.’ Los humanos son animales, y no todos los animales pueden o terminan reproduciéndose. ¿Quién puede decir que aquellos animales que no se reproducen no terminan viviendo una vidas hermosas? Esta es una definición buena para biología, pero no explica el significado humano de la vida, porque los humanos pueden razonar, lo que nos diferencia del resto de los animales. Otra definición de la vida es, “Tiempo que transcurre desde el nacimiento de un ser hasta su muerte o hasta el presente” (REAL ACADEMIA ESPAÑOLA: Diccionario de la lengua española). Este definición es mejor, pero no es la definición que estoy buscando.

La vida es no solo sobre el tiempo que pase, sino sobre qué ocurre en que tiempo. Este punto de vista es similar a algunos filosofos, “para otros filósofos, la vida es un conjunto de experiencias. Dentro de esta concepción la vida no puede ser entendida por las otras disciplinas ya que es algo que acontece, le sucede a los seres vivos, es por ello que no puede ser definida a ciencia exacta” (“Vida”). Son demasiados los factores que ocurren en la vida como para poder definirlos con precisión. También, todos tienen diferentes experiencias en sus vidas, y diferentes opiniones sobre la vida, según sus valores y principios morales. Considerándolo todo, nadie sabe la respuesta a lo que es la vida, entonces la vida es lo que uno hace de ella.

Muchas religiones enseñan que hay una vida después de esta y dependiendo de cómo viva su vida ahora, determinarás si tendrás una vida futura feliz. Esta es una característica de muchas religiones cristianas, que creen en una vida futura con el cielo y el infierno. Otras religiones creen que se obtiene más de una vida. Por ejemplo, en el Buddhism “se considera que la vida son los diferentes estados de reencarnación” (“Vida”). En el budismo, no sólo tienen múltiples vidas, sino que viven cada una en un cuerpo diferente. Con la creencia de

que tiene más de una vida, la gente da por sentada su vida. Las personas desperdician sus vidas, sólo para esperar la próxima. Esa no es manera de vivir la vida. En realidad, nadie sabe si tendremos otra vida después de esta, así que haz que su vida cuente, no la desperdicie.

Ahora, no soy religiosa, así que no creo en la vida después de la muerte. Yo creo en la vida que estoy viviendo ahora y que nosotros solo tenemos una vida. Sólo se vive una vez. Esto significa que no doy la vida por sentado. Cuido mi cuerpo comiendo bien y haciendo ejercicio para poder vivir una vida larga y saludable. Vivo mi vida en el presente y aprecio todo, incluso las pequeñas cosas. Cuando estoy con mi familia y amigos, me aseguro de guardar mi teléfono para mantenerme en el momento presente con ellos. Valoro la vida, que es una de las razones por las que quiero ser médico, para ayudar a las personas a vivir más y tener una mejor calidad de vida. Sólo tenemos una vida, por eso debemos aprovecharla al máximo y disfrutar cada momento.

Yo creo que la vida se trata de tener un propósito. Los psicólogos han investigado el significado de la vida y también coinciden en que el propósito es una forma de vida. “Los investigadores parecen tener dos formas principales de entender el significado de la vida: coherencia y propósito...Propósito significa un sentido de metas, objetivos y dirección fundamentales en la vida” (Martela, F. y Steger, MF). Incluso los psicólogos están de acuerdo conmigo en que el propósito le da sentido a la vida. Un propósito en la vida da dirección en la vida, con pasos a lo largo de un camino a seguir, para alcanzar sus metas que se alinean con su propósito. Tener un propósito da una razón para despertarse por la mañana, ya que se tiene que trabajar para lograr las metas que se correlacionan con su propósito. Lograr estas metas en su vida debería traer felicidad ya que está trabajando para lograr su propósito. Creo que el propósito es muy importante en la vida. Por ejemplo, muchas personas que viven en residencias de ancianos mueren antes que las que viven en otros lugares. Creo que esto se debe a que cuando las personas se mudan a residencias de ancianos pierden su propósito. Quizás ayudar a sus hijos con sus nietos era su propósito, pero ahora que viven en un asilo de ancianos, ya no tienen ese propósito. Además, en una residencia de ancianos todo está hecho para uno y ya pensado. Entonces la gente se aburre, se deprime y muere antes porque no está contenta en el asilo de ancianos. El asilo de ancianos les quitó su propósito y ya no tienen ganas de vivir.

No sólo se necesita tener un propósito en la vida, sino que también se debe disfrutar del propósito que se elige. Si no se disfruta o no cree verdaderamente en su propósito en la vida, ¿cuál es el punto de trabajar para lograrlo? Debe hacer de su propósito algo en lo que realmente crea y disfrute, ya que va a estar trabajando en él durante mucho tiempo, también podría ser algo que disfrute y traiga felicidad. También creo que puede cambiar su propósito a lo largo de la vida; no se tiene que ceñir al mismo propósito durante toda su vida. A lo largo de la vida, crecemos constantemente y nuestra mente evoluciona, por lo

que a medida que nos damos cuenta de más cosas sobre nosotros mismos o el mundo, podemos esperar que nuestro propósito en la vida cambie. Cuando tenía cinco años mi propósito en la vida era convertirme en princesa, pero ahora que he crecido, he cambiado mi propósito. También creo que la gente tiene una crisis de mediana edad debido a su propósito. Las personas se dan cuenta de que están a mitad de camino de sus preciosas vidas y comienzan a cuestionar su propósito. Se preguntan si van en la dirección correcta para lograr su propósito, si su propósito es algo que realmente los hace felices y disfrutan, o si existe otro propósito que preferirían perseguir y disfrutar. Me encanta la sensación que tengo cuando ayudo a los demás, sabiendo que hice algo virtuoso y marqué una diferencia en el mundo— por pequeña que sea. También disfruto aprender sobre ciencia, me resulta interesante aprender por qué las cosas son como son en el mundo que nos rodea. Con mis dos pasiones de ayudar a los demás y la ciencia, me ayudó a encontrar mi vocación para una carrera en el campo médico. Ésta es otra razón por la que quiero ser médico. Ahora bien, convertirme en médico requiere muchos años de aprendizaje, trabajo duro y dinero, así que será mejor que sea algo que disfrute, pero como convertirme en médico se alinea con mi propósito en la vida, sé que valdrá la pena y seré feliz al final.

Además de encontrar un propósito en la vida, también creo que es importante establecer relaciones con familiares y amigos. Su familia y amigos son quienes enseñan sus valores y moralidad fundamentales cuando es niño, son quienes ayudan a encontrar su propósito en la vida. Su familia y amigos son quienes mejor nos conocen y pueden guiarnos en la dirección correcta para encontrar un propósito que nos haga feliz en la vida. Ellos son quienes ayudan cuando las cosas se ponen difíciles y nos apoyan en el camino de la vida. Es muy importante tener un sistema de apoyo en la vida. Se elige con quién establecer conexiones, quiénes son sus familiares y amigos. Al decidir de quién rodearse en la vida, estas personas deben tener valores, moral y objetivos similares a los suyos. Estas personas deberían apoyarnos y hacernos feliz cuando estamos cerca de ellos. Como dice el refrán, uno se convierte en la gente en la que se rodea.

Creo que las relaciones son vitales para la vida. Todos necesitamos la conexión humana para mantenernos vivos. Mi bisabuela, que vivió hasta los 107 años, siempre decía que tenía que seguir haciendo amigos porque seguían muriendo. Sabía que para seguir viviendo una vida feliz, necesitaba seguir construyendo relaciones con la gente. Siempre intentaría hacer amistad con gente "más joven" para poder construir conexiones más fuertes a lo largo de los años. Además de tener buena salud, creo que fueron esas conexiones que hizo con otras personas las que la hicieron vivir tanto tiempo. También aprendimos de la pandemia de COVID-19 que las personas necesitan la conexión humana para vivir. Durante la pandemia, muchas personas desarrollaron trastornos de salud mental por tener que estar aisladas de familiares y amigos. En mi vida tengo familiares y amigos que me apoyan al 100%. Sé que mi familia estará ahí para mí día y noche, pase lo

que pase. Mi familia y yo compartimos muchos de los mismos valores y principios morales desde que me criaron. Mis amigos me apoyan cuando los tiempos se ponen difíciles y me animan cuando logro metas que conducen a mi propósito. También comparto muchos de los mismos valores, principios morales y propósitos con mis amigas, ya que ellas también están orientadas al servicio y les apasiona convertirse en médicas, enfermeras, psicólogas, dentistas, ingenieras y empresarias de moda sostenible.

En conclusión, no de por sentado la vida, encuentra un propósito en la vida y construye relaciones con los demás. Si tuviera que definir la vida, yo diría que es perseguir un propósito que me haga feliz y al mismo tiempo construir relaciones con amigos y familiares a lo largo del camino.

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Writing in Foreign Languages - Spanish

1st Place:

Caitlin True, “Spanish Oral Composition”

Como mujer joven y ciudadana global, ¿qué espero de la vida? Esta es una pregunta difícil. Admitiré que luché con cómo responderlo. Me dijeron que fuera honesto con mis pensamientos y sentimientos, así que diré la verdad. Como mujer joven y ciudadana global, no espero mucho de la vida.

Cuando era una niña, tenía grandes sueños sobre cómo sería mi vida. Iba a ser cantante, artista o estrella de cine. Me iba de aventuras y hacía lo que quisiera. A medida que crecí y fui expuesto a las redes sociales, las noticias y el mundo real, me di cuenta de que esos sueños eran casi imposibles de lograr. Entonces, cuando tenía doce años, decidí establecer metas más realistas y alcanzables. O, pensé que eran realistas y alcanzables. Fue un sueño simple. Yo tendría una casa pequeña que no se estaba desmoronando, un trabajo que me gustaba que pagaba las cuentas, los libros, y tal vez un perro. Me negué a ser demasiado específico o soñar demasiado grande, porque entonces podría no ser alcanzable. En la escuela secundaria, me di cuenta de que incluso esas pequeñas metas eran demasiado audaces para nuestro mundo.

He visto cómo COVID-19 afectó a mi país, con personas que se preocupan más por su derecho a usar lo que quieren que aquellos que podrían morir debido a sus decisiones. Veo guerras que se están gestando, el odio floreciendo, la división y la incapacidad de comprometerse. El racismo es rampante. Ser nazi y el antisemitismo están aparentemente bien ahora. Veo tiroteos masivos en las noticias todas las semanas y policías matando a personas negras en las calles. La violencia sólo está aumentando. Tengo miedo de caminar sola en cualquier lugar porque los hombres siempre tienen el potencial de ser violadores. Veo que la inflación aumenta y la gente lucha. Veo que el calentamiento global ocurre ante mis ojos, y las personas a cargo que pueden detenerlo no están haciendo nada porque el dinero importa más que el planeta en el que vivimos muriendo. He estado escuchando desde que era una niña que mi generación está condenada. El país está endeudado masivamente y no tendremos seguridad social. No podremos jubilarnos. Con la inflación, no podremos pagar el alquiler. Ciertamente no podremos comprar casas con los precios de la vivienda. Ir a la universidad significa más deuda que pasamos décadas pagando. E incluso con un título, encontrar un trabajo es prácticamente imposible a menos que estés en un

campo de alta demanda o tengas tres doctorados. El planeta está muriendo, y se supone que debemos arreglarlo, a pesar de que no fuimos nosotros los que causaron el problema en primer lugar.

Siempre ha habido una lucha en mi generación para encontrar alguna esperanza para el futuro. Estamos perdiendo nuestra motivación, y el COVID solo la empeoró. A menudo me he preguntado si algo de eso vale la pena. ¿Por qué intentar si no tiene sentido? Como mujer joven, espero que mis derechos no importen tanto como los de los hombres, y cualquier lugar que tenga en el mundo será algo por lo que debo luchar el doble de duro. Como ciudadana global, espero guerras y conflictos. Espero deuda, violencia y dificultades.

A pesar de mis puntos de vista pesimistas, todavía tengo alguna esperanza. Espero lograr mis metas. Quiero viajar, ver el mundo y explorar otras culturas. Planeo graduarme, y estoy trabajando hacia esa meta. Espero obtener un título de maestría. Espero pasar tiempo con mi familia y amigos. Espero poder vivir mi vida al máximo y no perder ni un solo minuto. Espero tener una vida tan satisfactoria como soñé que sería.

No quiero mucho, pero estoy dispuesto a trabajar para ello. Me he dado cuenta de que evitar metas o grandes sueños para evitar la decepción no es ninguna forma de vivir mi vida. El realismo es importante, pero también lo es el optimismo, y esas dos cosas pueden funcionar juntas ocasionalmente. No espero mucho de mi vida, pero creo que seré feliz si lo intento.