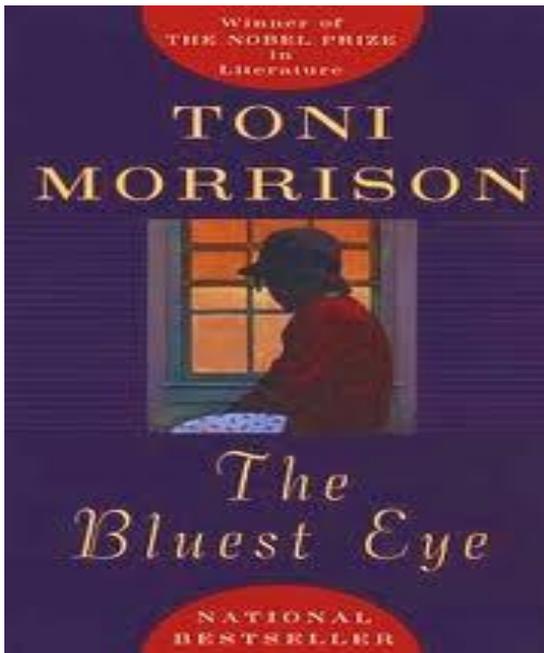


Incoming 12th Grade Summer Packet

Directions: Complete the following two tasks. Each essay will count as a separate grade.

Task #1: Read *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison and write an essay about one of the three suggested essay topics.

Task #2: Select one of the essays topics for the Common Application and write an essay of 650 words or less.



Overview

Pecola Breedlove, a young black girl, prays every day for beauty. Mocked by other children for the dark skin, curly hair, and brown eyes that set her apart, she yearns for normalcy, for the blond hair and blue eyes that she believes will allow her to finally fit in. Yet as her dream grows more fervent, her life slowly starts to disintegrate in the face of adversity and strife. A powerful examination of our obsession with beauty and conformity, Toni Morrison's virtuosic first novel asks powerful questions about race, class, and gender with the subtlety and grace that have always characterized her writing.

From the 1993 Nobel Prize-winner comes a novel "so charged with pain and wonder that it becomes poetry" (*The New York Times*). First published in 1965, *The Bluest Eye* is the story of a black girl who prays -- with unforeseen consequences--for her eyes to turn blue so she will be accepted.

Task 1: Choose one of the following questions about *The Bluest Eye* and write a well developed essay. Your essay must be at least 5-6 paragraphs in length.

1. *The Bluest Eye* deals with Pecola's struggle with her self-image and self-worth. How does Toni Morrison convey this struggle? Why does Pecola want to have blue eyes? Examine this internal conflict through the analysis of social attitudes towards beauty and acceptance.
2. Choose a character or relationship you find most fascinating in the novel and analyze his/her/their significance to the novel as a whole.
3. *The Bluest Eye* was Toni Morrison's first novel. In what ways is the novel still relevant to contemporary American society? How is it pertinent to your own experience as an American living in the 21st century?

Guidelines

In your essay, be sure to:

- Write an introduction with an overview of the novel
- Write a clearly written thesis which answers the central question you chose
- Include several examples from the novel in your body paragraphs
- **Include at least one direct quote from the novel in each body paragraph**
- Provide analysis of each example or quote given
- Write a conclusion which restates your thesis and sums up your main points
- Your essay should be typed (12 pt. font, double spaced, 1 inch margins)

Task 2: College Essay

Directions: Choose **one** of the following six prompts and write a well-developed essay. The maximum word limit is **650** words.

2017 - 2018 Common Application Essay Prompts

The essay prompts are as follows:

1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.
2. The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
3. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?
4. Describe a problem you've solved or a problem you'd like to solve. It can be an intellectual challenge, a research query, an ethical dilemma - anything that is of personal importance, no matter the scale. Explain its significance to you and what steps you took or could be taken to identify a solution.
5. Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
6. Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?

What schools look for in a Common Application essay:

- Your writing skills
- Your ability to communicate your ideas.
- Your personality – what makes you laugh, think, hope, dream, care. In other words, what's meaningful to you and why.
- Schools like to see how you think, so show them that process.
- **Most of the best essays don't have nice, easy stories. They've got an obstacle thrown in your path, a problem you have to solve, a decision you have to make, a realization you came to, or some other circumstance that's helped shape you into who you are.**
- **Essays include reflection—you need to be able to take a step back from your experience to understand how it's shaped you and/or your goals.**