**The Original Composition**

Write a multi-paragraph composition (≥ 3 paragraphs, approximately 300 words).

Compositions that receive perfect scores are creative and fresh.  The writing is clearly on topic, and the vague topic has been narrowed to a single, supportable, specific and significant thesis.  They use details/examples effectively, and vocabulary is appropriate, precise, & varied.

They reflect command of standard written English and an ability to use language and essay structure to fit the purpose of the composition.

**Tips**

* Plan. It will prevent you from wandering off topic or sitting there in the middle, not knowing where to go. Create brief notes, a mind map, a formal outline or a chart.
* Remember to limit your topic: present a single, specific, significant, and supportable thesis.
* Study transitional words and use them between sentences, ideas and paragraphs.
* Construct a variety of types and lengths of sentences. Review the types (declarative, interrogative, imperative and exclamatory) and the forms (simple, compound, complex and compound/complex). Eliminate wordiness by combining sentences, but leave some simple and short for emphasis.
* Try to monitor your spelling and grammar as you write and then edit for errors and “typos” at the end.
* Review the forms: narrative, expository, and argumentative.
* Don't use offensive language or inappropriate subject matter. This will not allow you to meet the criteria to show sophisticated use of language.

**Narrative form**

* It might be best to write from a 3rd person limited omniscient point of view. That way you avoid the very personal rambling rant, the diary sounding thing, the unimaginative summary, the telling my friends at a party tone. You want to sound sophisticated and the first person narrative very often does not.
* Use precise descriptions. Only describe in detail the things that help your purpose become clear. If the setting (weather) isn't important, leave it out. If my point is that maturity means learning to accept all people, I will paint some pretty vivid detail around how bad my sister's boyfriend is. If my character changes from judging to accepting, I will describe the scowl on my face and the hatred in my eyes at first, and then I'll describe the fondness in my gaze as I see him caring for his daughter.
* In a narrative, carefully chosen detail is the support.
* Paragraph 1: set the scene/situation and introduce character (try one of the conventional leads: start with dialogue, in the middle of action, with a character reflecting, or traditional who, what, where, when)
* Rest of paragraphs: insert a conflict, a problem for your character. Change paragraphs when something new happens, when a new speaker has dialogue, or when you describe a new thing. There is no rule about amount of paragraphs, start a new one when it feels right.
* Many writers finish with the thoughtful mature inner thoughts of the protagonist, realizing an epiphany or reacting to the conflict and resolution.
* Narrative essays that score well leave an impression on the reader. They have originality and flair. Even if they tell a cliche story, they do it in a new and fresh way with original figurative language and creativity. Try to make your reader see something in a new way. Try to make the reader feel an emotional connection from a sense of knowing what it feels like to be the character.
* The best narrative essays do a lot of showing, rather than telling. An intelligent audience wants implication and symbolism, hints, suspense, twists, humour, etc. They don't want summary. They want to be engaged intellectually.

**The Personal or Expository Form**

* Your challenge here is to make your writing as appealing as possible. You must use strong vocabulary, insightful commentary, compelling evidence, and smooth flow of ideas.
* You will have to be organized and preparing an outline is a great idea. The thesis statement should be clear (and normally at the end of the introductory paragraph).
* Lead with something catchy (an interesting, startling, strange or heart-warming anecdote or fact). Try starting with a broad discussion of the topic and then ending the intro by narrowing the topic to your single, specific, supportable, significant thesis.
* Each body paragraph (2-4 probably) should have a clear topic sentence that links to the previous paragraph and the thesis statement. This is where your transitional words come in handy. Each body paragraph should also have several supporting ideas clearly explained and backed up with evidence. Remember to purposefully conclude each paragraph and link all ideas back to the thesis.
* The concluding paragraph should summarize your thesis and main ideas. Try to leave a lasting impression. Some writers end with a more general look at the topic again (like how they started). Some cleverly come full circle back to the fact or anecdote that they started with...looking at it now with a new fuller understanding. What did you discover through the writing?
* Some students choose to write a literary response essay. There are some benefits to this approach: you've read a bunch of stuff in English and if the topic fits with a text you are familiar with, you can certainly write with confidence. Don't just summarize though. Make sure to tell audiences what that text has to say about the topic. Often the material from your other course, History, Geography, Social Justice, Social Studies 11, Law, etc. will connect with the topic. Use this knowledge as data for your essay. If you are worldly and experienced, use your personal experiences. If you keep informed about current events, use this. Use what you know.

Adapted from Ms. McDonald’s English Page, 2019,

https://sites.google.com/site/mcdonaldenglish/mcdonald.englishmainpage/english12/original-composition-tips