

Class Participation. Students who take ownership of their educations and become regular contributors to class discussions tend to get more out of class. They are more likely to learn and more likely to be engaged. As a moderator or facilitator of class discussions, I am listening carefully to comments and assessing student understanding. I will provide occasional feedback to guide students in their comments. Some students find keeping a reader's journal or annotating the text helps them be prepared to participate in class discussions.

Students will be organized into rotating small groups/pairs of class discussion leaders in order to ensure students will have ample opportunity to participate.

Most class discussions will be scored on a 5-point scale (to adjust for virtual learning and a shorter length of class discussions, fewer comments may be considered acceptable for proficiency and students will be allowed to participate on a channel chat in addition to a class meeting):

5/5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Four or more significant/noteworthy comments Consistent focus on topic Respectful to peers and open to new ideas Defends points with reasoned and specific support Rich in detail, specific, vivid language—use of textual evidence Imaginative, insightful, well-chosen ideas Fully elaborated, clearly ordered, well-developed ideas Fluently presented
4/5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three or more significant/noteworthy comments Central focus on topic Elaborated, organized with a sense of order Some insight, adequate detail and direct quotes Somewhat fluent
3/5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One or more significant/noteworthy comments Some communication of ideas, but may be inadequately developed Limited logic and inconsistent organization of ideas Limited detail or too general (Few/no cited examples of textual evidence) Lacking in fluency
2/5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One or more comments Central ideas are not clear Limited insight, little elaboration Irrelevant ideas, little focus Unimaginative Little support/too general
1/5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One or fewer comments Topics are barely or not addressed Lack of organization No relevant ideas Little support/too general Rambling

Points may be deducted for excessive side conversation, sleeping, playing on phone, doing other work, being unprepared for class, being a distraction to class, leaving class for an unreasonable amount of time, or other distracting or disrespectful behavior.

Think Pieces. During some units you will be assigned to compose a think piece, a two to three page essay. According to English professor and author Peter Elbow, a think piece describes “writing that is a bit more thought out and worked over—but not yet a *[lengthy] formal* essay: exploratory but not merely freewriting.” These will be a good opportunity for you to make connections in literature, explore various critical theories to the literature, or flesh out ideas and insights that could become the basis for one of your IB assessments. You could compare two concepts or theories from our readings or you could compare a concept from the reading to something you have experienced. For the very brave, once or twice a year you can try creative writing inspired by the text. The think pieces will be used for class discussions and you will be expected to upload them each to Turnitin.com by the assigned due date.

9 Point Think Piece Rubric (adapted from the 9 point AP rubric)

An 8-9 think piece clearly, directly, and fully develops the topic and makes connections within texts. This paper approaches the text analytically, supports a coherent thesis with evidence from the text, and cleverly and concisely explains how the evidence illustrates and reinforces its thesis. There is clearly insight presented and the topic is fresh and fully developed. The essay employs subtlety in its use of the text and the writer’s style is fluent and flexible. It is also free of mechanical and grammatical errors.

A 6-7 think piece covers the topic clearly and directly but with less development and connection than an 8-9 paper. It demonstrates insight, a good understanding of the text, and supports its thesis with appropriate textual evidence. While its approach is analytical, the analysis is less precise than in the 8-9 essay, and its use of the text is competent but not typically subtle. The writing in this paper is forceful and clear with few if any grammatical and mechanical errors.

A 5 think piece addresses the selected topic intelligently but does not address it fully and specifically—there may be little evidence or development of connection. Its thesis may be superficial and it may not indicate thoughtfulness of a topic. It is characterized by a good but general grasp of the text using the text to frame an apt response to the prompt. It may employ textual evidence sparingly or offer evidence without attaching it to the thesis. The essay is clear and organized but may be somewhat mechanical. This paper may be brief and lack the thoroughness of the higher scoring essays. The paper may also be marred by grammatical and mechanical errors.

A 3-4 think piece fails in some important way to fulfill the expectations of the assignment. It may be superficial, brief, provide minimal textual support for its thesis (or use textual evidence poorly), or base its analysis on a misreading or a superficial reading of some part of the text. This essay may present one or more incisive insights among others of less value or may be brief and not thorough. The writing may be similarly uneven in development with lapses in organization, clarity, grammar, and mechanics.

A 1-2 think piece commonly combines two or more serious failures. It may not develop an actual focused topic; it may indicate a serious misreading/misunderstanding of the text or literary theory; it may not offer textual evidence or may use it in a way that suggests a failure to understand the text; it may be unclear, badly written, or unacceptably brief. The style of this paper is usually marked by egregious errors. Occasionally a paper in this range is smoothly written but devoid of content.

9 40/40 (A+)

8 38/40 (A)

7 36/40 (A-)

6 34/40 (B)

5 32/40 (B-)

4 30/40 (C)

3 28/40 (C-)

2 25/40 (F)

1 20/40 (F)