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Final Essay

Writing has been something that has always been a challenge for me and I think I have improved tremendously not only through my three years here, but especially through my junior year. Throughout my junior year I have had many writing assignments, but I feel that I have mostly improved on not summarizing my book but relating it back to the prompt, and my topic sentences, but I feel as if I still need to improve on my concluding sentences and paragraphs.

A strength that I have that I definitely improved on is not summarizing the book but relating the book and the evidence back to the prompt. Overall, I think I was confused as to what the difference between an analysis and a summary was. An analysis is an explanation of something or more of a basis for interpretation or discussion versus a summary is just a recap of the main points put into your own words. In my junior year English class we read the book *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald and wrote an essay about the moral decay of the book. Instead of answering the prompt and proving that the book showed moral decay, I summarized the book. With each essay we wrote from there I improved on not summarizing but relating it back to the prompt. With the most recent essay we wrote I talked about how the setting plays a very big role in the book. My class read excerpts from the book *The Things They Carried* by Tim O’Brien. When talking about setting, it was difficult not to summarize what happened at this certain area and why it happened there, I really focused on relating it back to the prompt and having the analysis more about the prompt and not a summary. Overall, I have improved when it comes to a summary versus and analysis and I feel that I have also improved on my topic sentences.

Something that has always been difficult for me to do is write topic sentences and make them arguable. In my IS class with my teacher, Ms. Thomas, we went over the different types of topics sentences there was. Once that I had a good understanding of the different types of topic sentences, Ms. Thomas would give me a subject and I would have to come up with three different types of topic sentences. This has helped me improve tremendously on my topic sentences and making them arguable. In the first essay we wrote in junior year English class we wrote about the American Dream and what is it. In the American Dream Essay, my topic sentences don’t even relate back to my thesis and barely relate back to my prompt. Compared to my essay on *The Things They Carried*, my topic sentences have improved wonderfully since the beginning of the year. My *The Things They Carried* essay’s topic sentences related both to the thesis and to my writing prompt. They were clear but arguable statements that described what I was going to be talking about in the paragraph. Even though I have improved on my topic sentences, I still have room for improvement on the concluding sentences and paragraphs.

Overall, in all of my essays an area of improvement has always been my concluding sentences and paragraphs. Instead of concluding what I was talking about I just end the paragraph. Not having a concluding sentence makes the transition into another paragraph choppy and not smooth. I tended to do that a lot in *The Great Gatsby* essay, instead of putting in a concluding sentence and transitioning into the next paragraph, I just ended the paragraph with my topic and then went straight into the next paragraph. I need to work on relating back to the thesis as well as wrapping up what I was talking about. Concluding sentences also make the transition into the next body paragraph a lot smoother. I need to practice with making concluding sentences more and make sure that they relate back to my thesis.

Writing essays has always been a challenge for me that I love to take on. I think that I have improved on certain skills as a writer, but there is definitely places where I can still improve. Overall, my skills as a writer has improved with analyzing and not summarizing the book, the use of topic sentences and making them arguable and I feel as if I need to improve on my concluding sentences and relating them back to the prompt.