

## Rubric for the 1<sup>st</sup>-Term Expository Essay

	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Organization</b> (10 Points)	The paper includes a unique thesis, and the paper is organized to reach a clear, forceful conclusion.	A thesis is used correctly in the paper, and leads to a proper, reasoned conclusion.	Thesis and conclusion either say very little or they disagree somewhat.	The writer's analysis is difficult to understand due to poor organization.
<b>Supports</b> (15 points)	Details bolster the writers ideas through the use of quotes, comparisons and/or historical facts.	The writer uses quotes, comparisons and historical facts to back up each idea.	Quotes and facts do not back up ideas presented in the paper.	The paper fails to back up its ideas with facts. There is no effort to organize the paper using paragraphs.
<b>Grammar</b> (10 points)	The paper has no spelling or grammatical errors.	The paper has fewer than five spelling or grammatical errors. Paragraphs are used to separate ideas within the argument.	The paper does not separate ideas using paragraphs, or it has too many grammatical mistakes.	The poor grammar makes it difficult to understand the writer's ideas.
<b>Understanding of Literature</b> (10 points)	Provides unique and clever insights into the selection.	Gives adequate information to understand the selection.	Lacks some information needed to understand the selection.	It is difficult to make any conclusions about the selection from the essay.

*When you complete the paper, please staple this rubric to the top of the paper before turning it into the basket.*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Quote: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Author: \_\_\_\_\_

English 11 Honors

Mr. Dittes

# Sample Critical Evaluation

*For this essay you will take a quote from one of the readings from this semester, and expound upon it—providing some of your own ideas. This will combine the skills you already had in thinking critically about literature with the abilities we have learned in using quotes, numbers and anecdotes to support our brilliant ideas. My example is from the Romantic Godfather, Henry David Thoreau.*

**Introduction** Legend has it that Spanish explorer, Juan Ponce de Leon, traversed the wilds of Florida, searching for the Fountain of Youth. He never found it. A poisoned Indian arrow found him during a battle, and he died in 1621 aged of 61. It would take more than 200 years for another man to complete de Leon’s quest. In 1854, America’s Henry David Thoreau would find the Fountain of Youth—not in a clear Florida spring but bubbling up from within his own mind.

**Analysis** Like most movements throughout American history, the Romantics rooted themselves in youth. Since the days of Rousseau, they had argued that children should be raised to become individuals, not clones. In many ways they thought that children might be the key to figuring out what adulthood and maturity were really about. As he struggled to maintain a lifestyle of simplicity amid America’s huge mid-century leap into technology and empire, Thoreau found the best example was children.

**Connect to Literature** Thoreau went into the woods around Concord, Massachusetts, he said, “I did not wish to live what was not life.” There, as he spent his time reducing his possessions, living simply, I think he found the Fountain of Youth. It wasn’t a spring that trickled into Walden Pond. No, I think it was the remembrance of a time when the simple life hadn’t merely been a wish but an essential fact of life. *“I have always been regretting that I was not as wise as the day I was born,”* he wrote. On Walden Pond his existence was a potent blend of survival and wonder, just as it had been when he was a child.

**Selected Quote** In many ways he had returned to childhood. He had found a Fountain of Youth. As his countrymen invaded Mexico and traveled on steam boats and railroads, Thoreau was crawling on his hands and knees through pine needles in the woods. As his countrymen grew fat on rich foods from all over the world, Thoreau grew strong on the most simple foods, bread and fruit. Only in language and thought did he surpass a child’s ability—and who is to say that young children *don’t* think and dream as vividly as adults?

**Connect** Thoreau was not the only thinker to connect childhood to Eternity. Jesus once said, “Unless you become like one of these little children, you will not enter the Kingdom of Heaven” (Matthew 18:3). Clearly he knew that his movement would endure with the help of those who understood simple truths—and didn’t try to muddy truth as adults are so prone to do. In every age, writers have used youths to show truth to their societies, from Twain and Huckleberry Finn to Yann Martell and Pi Patel. I think that...

**Conclusion**