

Name:  
Date:

Period:  
Ms. Lopez

## The Essay Project: Requirements & Explanation

*The purpose of this project is for you to think critically about an essay independently, and to expose you to many different essays in a more informal setting.*

For your individually selected essay:

- ✓ Write a **brief** summary of the essay (Be concise but complete; this shows that you understand the essay.)
- ✓ Identify the essay's **thesis** (the thesis may be *explicitly* stated or *implicitly* communicated)
- ✓ Identify the essay's **purpose** (to inform, to entertain, to persuade - remember, an essay may have multiple purposes.)
- ✓ Write down any new vocabulary words and define them (include the part of speech).
- ✓ Identify and discuss the use of literary devices, effective literary elements, patterns of organization. . . in other words, any literary or rhetorical strategies you can find about which you can write intelligently. Identify the term, quote the example from the text, cite the paragraph of the quote, and **comment on its purpose or effect**. You are required to have five. [Hint: looking at the questions at the end of the essay will help you complete this requirement.]
- ✓ You may be asked to present your findings to the class in an informal setting.

For all of the class' selected essays:

- ✓ Each student will read *all the essays chosen by classmates*. (Copies of each essay will be provided along with a suggested reading schedule.)
- ✓ Each student will record & define vocabulary words (include the part of speech) *for all essays chosen by classmates*. A vocabulary word is any word that you do not know. **Two vocabulary quizzes will be administered using words taken from the class' chosen essays.**
- ✓ Each student will list the *ten essays that were most enjoyable* and provide an informal explanation including two reasons why reading each of those ten essays was so enjoyable.
- ✓ Each student will list the *ten essays that were the not enjoyable* and provide an informal explanation including two reasons why reading each of those ten essays was not enjoyable.

### Sample Essay Project for "Riders on the Earth Together: Brothers in the Eternal Cold"

**Summary:** People thought the Earth was the center of the world and they selfishly hurt other people. People then thought that the world was meaningless and random and lived in a world full of death and despair. Now that people have seen the Earth from space, they see how small and fragile it truly is. Because of this new knowledge, the speaker hopes individuals will begin to identify with everyone on the planet as one human family of "brothers."



**Purpose:** to persuade

**Thesis:** All of humanity should see itself as bound together in brotherhood because we share the same planet.

**Vocabulary:**

1. CONCEPTION -n.- a general idea; the sum of a person's ideas and beliefs
2. FARCE -n.- a ridiculous or empty show
3. PREPOSTEROUS -adj.- ridiculous; contrary to nature, reason, or common sense

**Literary Analysis:**

1. The **metaphor** in paragraph 3 refers to the Earth as “that tiny raft.” This device creates an *effective image of the Earth as the only safe place for humans in the sea of infinite space.*
2. *The idea of the earth as a raft and space as the sea* is again seen in the **alliterative** statement found in paragraph 3: “little, lonely, floating planet.”
3. Paragraphs 1, 2, and 3 each contain an **allusion** to “Dante’s” *Inferno*; the reference to Dante’s conception of heaven and hell, and people’s view of it in relation to their view of the world *helps the readers understand how people’s views have changed over time.*
4. The use of **parallel structure** at the end of paragraph 1, “and from that high place we ruled and killed and conquered...” and paragraph 2, “in world-wide wars or in blasted cities or in concentration camps” *gives each consequence of man’s conception of himself equal weight and is a clear pattern that the reader can follow easily.*
5. In paragraph 2, the **spatial organization** of the prepositional phrases “in the solar system of a minor star off at the edge of an inconsiderable galaxy in the immeasurable distances of space...” *takes the reader from our solar system far out into deep space, showing how far off from anything else we are.*

**NOTE:** The italics are added to emphasize the section where you are commenting on the devices’ effects. Please remember that you will need not only to identify the device but also to comment on its effect.