

10th Grade English Essay – “This I Believe”

As a part of Webb’s Emerging Voices Program, all sophomores are required to write an oration in the second quarter and deliver it in chapel in the third quarter. Here in the first quarter, you will write two different essays that might serve as your oration. These two essays will serve as major essay grades in English class, and, if you like, you can choose one of them as the oration you turn in to your advisor for your chapel performance.

Topic: Write a 500-525 word essay that completes the sentence “I believe” Visit <http://thisibelieve.org/> for some wonderful examples. Decide on a topic and stance you want to assert publicly in chapel, on the stage, in front of the entire Webb community. Do not choose a frivolous topic; speak about a subject that really matters to you and your audience. This is not the place to lay bare intimate personal details or embarrass people who have done you wrong. Twenty years from now, if you were to watch a video of yourself performing this topic on stage, are you 100% confident you would have no regrets?

Audience: Your audience is the Webb community, including 6th graders, faculty, alumni, and parents. Your oration essay must be appropriate for everyone in that audience, and you should be comfortable publicly sharing all the material in your essay. Since most of your audience will be Webb students, use expressions and words that are scholarly yet capable of being understood by all. Use examples, analogies, and your own personal stories that Webb students and faculty will relate to and be interested in. Moderate amounts of *appropriate* humor can be a wonderful way to spark interest. If you choose a contentious topic that has led to heated debate in the past, be tactful by showing respect for people who may believe differently.

Purpose: Write an essay you will be able to deliver orally that asserts what you believe and persuades the members of the audience to agree with you. You are not just stating what you believe; you are arguing why you are correct. Most of the time spent on this essay will be figuring out how to support your statement of belief. Try to figure out how to make everyone in the audience sit up, listen, and care about what you are saying. You are allowed to research supporting information and statistics, but avoid inserting quotes from famous people. This is *your* statement of belief, not theirs.

Essay Requirements:

- Meet all deadlines posted on RenWeb.
- Write a **500-525 word** essay that will take at least 2 1/2 minutes to recite on stage.
- Format your essay in accordance with the MLA format as shown by my example “Five-Paragraph Essay” handout and published on the Purdue OWL website.
- **All drafts must be typed and turned in by the start of class on the day they are due or they will be penalized 10% and then 10% for each additional day they are late.**
- Because you will ultimately be delivering this essay orally, all information from outside sources must be introduced by a **signal phrase identifying the source** of the information.
- Secondary sources are allowed, but not required. If you consult outside sources for this essay, you must keep careful track of all the **ideas** you get from these sources, cite them in the text of your essay using parenthetical citations, and list them on the works cited page in the MLA format.
- “Do nothing on the sly.” **Using someone else’s words, ideas, or data (including websites and books) without citing the source is plagiarism and violates the honor code.** Quotes, paraphrases, and summaries from all your sources should be cited in

the text of your essay with parenthetical documentation and all of your sources should be listed on the works cited page. The cardinal rule is to show where you get words, ideas, or information from someone else. When you turn in the final draft of a paper you will sign a pledge that states: **“I pledge my word of honor as a Webb lady/gentleman that I did not receive unauthorized aid on this paper.”**