I Am…Poetry Assignment (50 pts)

Individuality may mean either accepting or rejecting cultural norms or group standards. In “I Am Joaquin,” Gonzales focuses on the struggles of colonization, racial/ethnic discrimination, and poverty as he writes about and reflects on the process of establishing his individual identity.

Assignment: Keeping in the tradition of a “I Am Joaquin” and upon reflecting on how your identity is shaped by various influences such as family, society, religion, ethnicity, language, socio-economic status, nationality, education, history, heritage, personality, through your own reflection, family interviews, and reading of poetry in class, your assignment is to create your own I AM poem.

- Brainstorm a list of events, individuals, ideas, experiences, images, etc., that are significant to how you define yourself. This list should encompass the myriad of attributes, past and present that make up the complex self that is YOU. You will then have a place from which to start writing.
- Establish a theme that is reflective to your own experiences and self. Go through your list and see which of your events, ideas, etc., fit with your theme. Add to your list as you need. Begin to weed out what will not work with your poem.
- Show the development and progression and/or evolution of your cultural/racial/ethnic and individual identity.
- Include personal analysis, ideas, and thoughts to reveal how these experiences reflect your identity and how they impact you.
- Choose your words carefully as you express yourself. Your diction (word choice and sentence structure/word order) is vital for the tone of your poem and for communicating connections.
- Incorporate literary devices (allusion, imagery, metaphor, symbolism, etc.) to help emphasize significant aspects of your identity. Make sure to use allusions as Gonzales did.
- Check for correct conventions (spelling, grammar, punctuation and structure) before submitting your assignment.
- Your poem should be at least two pages and centered.
- Create a video using images from your poem with the audio of your poem.

Rubric: An I Am poem will:
- Mimic Gonzales’ form well
- Demonstrate a consistent theme by repeating and returning to the theme in various ways with literary devices, diction, and allusions.
- Demonstrate depth of thought and reflection through content, diction, development, and connections
- Demonstrate mastery of poetic forms through effective use of literary devices
- Reveal careful use of conventions and careful proof-reading with few to no errors

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