

ENG4C: Letter to My Thirty-Seven-Year-Old Self

So here it is...the “personal biggie” of the year, which is, ironically, not a “mark” biggie”: the report you have just completed is much more significant as it is in keeping with the core skill set that we have developed this year (just a reminder) and that I need to evaluate. But hopefully this will be more of a “biggie” in terms of your thinking about and connecting with who you are and who you hope to be. I’ve tried to structure the assignment around the questions that you developed. When we discussed this there weren’t a lot of answers to these questions but these are the sorts of things that you seemed to want to ask your thirty-seven-year-old self. So what I’ve done is set the assignment up using these questions, with the expectations being that you will be able to ask them and then provide answers if there are problems so that, for instance, if you are asking (to use the first question that you came up with):

What are you doing with your life? Is what you are doing with your time productive? Are you really challenging yourself?

you get to answer the question in the following manner:

If you are doing something meaningful/productive/challenging that’s great. If not I, someone related to yourself that is not so much “less experienced” as being in the middle of a different set of experiences, and so in a different headspace, someone who is at least entitled to an opinion about what you are doing would like to suggest the following: [at which point you recommend what your thirty seven year old self should do: really good here would be to take into account what you—even your 17 year old self—knows are your strengths and weaknesses, and will maybe be your strengths and weaknesses in the future.]

But let’s lay out the structure of the larger letter first after which you can get into specifics.

- 1) To begin you are going to introduce yourself. You could start with something like:

Hi! Remember me: I’m your seventeen year old self. I know: even though you lived with me pretty much nonstop—okay entirely nonstop—back in the day, it’s hard to remember entirely what I was like. So I thought I would start this letter to you with a reminder of what I am/was like: [after which you fill in who you are or at least think you are right now].

- 2) Then ask and answer the questions that we’ve developed below
- 3) Finish with some encouragement. Worth remembering in this respect is that in twenty years you will have been through a lot. Hopefully what you go through will mostly be good. But there will also be some bumpy stuff on life’s little highway, and this letter, the way it works, is asking about and responding to some tough questions that may well force your thirty seven year old self to think about some of that tough stuff so you really want to finish up with some encouragement/something positive that you can say to this person.

So here are the questions that you are going to ask and then provide answers for if things aren’t going quite as planned/hoped for:

- 1) What are you doing with your life? Is what you are doing with your time productive? Are you really challenging yourself?
- 2) Are you getting the exercise that you need/deserve?
- 3) Have there been any changes in your life—changes in attitudes, expectations, circumstances, relationships (jobs, locations (both physical and mental), partners) that you didn't expect ? Have you been able deal with these changes successfully? Try to respond to what to do in the case of three of the items that are in brackets above (the three that are most important to you).
- 4) Have you dealt very well with intergenerational challenges in your life? (kids, parents, students?, employees or younger workmates?) In this case try to make some recommendations as to what to do, based on your synthesis of the works you have considered in class.
- 5) Are you treating others around you as well as you would like to? My (Mr. Jones) contribution to this process.
- 6) And finally, as per our discussion in class, one more question that you'd like to ask yourself that is particular to yourself, and that you would like to see answered.

Note on readers and reading: Is your letter going to contain personal stuff? Stuff that you'd like to pass along to yourself that you don't want me to read but that you'd really, really like to include in your discussion? Let's do this:

- 1) Write a version of our letter that I can read, and mark, and so that part of it can be read to the group (doesn't have to be the whole thing, but could be a page or two).
- 2) Then add on or change your letter as needed and print this version, seal it up, keep it/give it to your parents for safekeeping/do whatever you are going to do with it.

Due Date:

Thursday. I'd like all three of you to come to class and read a bit of it Friday. There will be treats.

Criteria		Level One (50-59%)	Level Two (60-69%)	Level Three (70-79%)	Level Four (80-100%)
Knowledge and Understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key features of the texts discussed (e.g. material from books) 	Demonstrates a minimal understanding of material presented as references may be very weak, flawed and/or absent.	Demonstrates a moderate or inconsistent understanding of material presented as detail is lacking and intended audience would not understand	Demonstrates a considerable understanding of material presented during class, describing key features that are specific, accurate and relevant	Demonstrates an excellent understanding of material presented in class by describing key features that are specific, precise and clearly relevant
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structure 	Focus is unclear due to multiple flaws in organization	Response may be flawed/weak at one or two points as focus strays from topic	Response is focused and organized	Response is consistently focused and logically organized throughout
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarity of expression 		Transitions are awkward and/or absent	Transitions are used inconsistently	Transitions are used effectively	Transitions are seamless
Thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examples to illustrate 	Writing lacks clarity and/or precision at several points; errors in grammar and spelling interfere with the reader's understanding at several points	Writing lacks clarity or precision at points; grammar and spelling errors interfere with the understanding of the reader	Writing is clear, concise; very few grammar and spelling errors, which do not interfere with the understanding of the reader	Writing is clear, concise and sophisticated; grammar and spelling errors are absent or minimal
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Critical Analysis 	Examples are provided but some may be very weak, not appropriate or absent, showing a flawed understanding of ideas being illustrated	Examples are provided, but may be weak, vague and/or show an inconsistent understanding of ideas being illustrated	Examples are specific and relevant and show a solid understanding of ideas being illustrated	Examples are specific, relevant and demonstrate a thorough and sophisticated understanding of the ideas being illustrated
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Critical Analysis 	Understanding of how evidence functions to support the point is frequently weak and/or flawed	Understanding of how evidence functions to support the point is inconsistent	Understanding of how evidence functions to support the point is clear and complete	Demonstrates a highly detailed, sophisticated and subtle understanding of how the evidence functions to reveal the point

Mark: