

Honors English 10

Unit 1: At War with Ourselves and Others

Summative Assessment 1: Explanatory Essay

Read and annotate the following excerpt from *An Essay on Man*, written by Alexander Pope in 1732 at the height of the Neoclassical Age. Determine the complex central idea that Pope asserts about humanity. Then, select a minimum of three texts from the list below, and explain how these texts challenge and/or support Pope's idea. Consult the rubric for details about scoring.

from *An Essay on Man*

Alexander Pope

Know then thyself, presume not God to scan;
The proper study of mankind is man.
Placed on this isthmus of a middle state,
A being darkly wise, and rudely great:
With too much knowledge for the skeptic side,
With too much weakness for the stoic's pride,
He hangs between; in doubt to act, or rest;
In doubt to deem himself a god, or beast;
In doubt his mind or body to prefer;
Born but to die, and reasoning but to err;
Alike in ignorance, his reason such,
Whether he thinks too little, or too much:
Chaos of thought and passion, all confused;
Still by himself abused, or disabused;
Created half to rise, and half to fall
Great lord of all things, yet a prey to all;
Sole judge of truth, in endless error hurled:
The glory, jest, and riddle of the world!

Potential Texts for Supporting Evidence

- Connell, Richard. "The Most Dangerous Game."
- Doty, Mark. "Golden Retrievals."
- Frost, Robert. "Mending Wall."
- Jackson, Shirley. "The Lottery."
- Shakespeare, William. "Seven Ages of Man." *As You Like It*.
- Swenson, May. "Southbound on the Freeway."
- Twain, Mark. "The Lowest Animal."
- Wilson, E. O. "Is War Inevitable?" *Discover* June 2012. 52-56.
- Horgan, John. "No, War Is Not Inevitable." *Discover* June 2012. 57.
- Pinker, Steven. "Violence Vanquished." *The Wall Street Journal* 24 Sept. 2011.