

A violin and its bow are positioned on the left side of the frame, resting on a sheet of aged musical notation. The background is a dark, textured surface, possibly leather, with a large, ornate white letter 'E' and the word 'Etudes' in a cursive font. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the textures of the violin, the paper, and the background.

Etudes

2

20 Days of Writing Exercises

The purpose of these writing exercises is to help you learn to get words on the page... without hesitation. But there is more. Much more. I want you to understand what makes for good writing - by exposing you to the very best writers. Writers such as Voltaire, Johnson, Shakespeare, and more, have a keen understanding of humanity...and the craft of writing. Through distributed practice (consistent practice of the same thing over time), you should grow in your understanding of the craft of writing.

Goals

1. With practice, you should be able to write without pausing for a certain length of time in response to a writing prompt (word production).
2. With practice, you should be able to discern the meaning of quotes from famous people (word dissection).
3. With practice, you should be able to write extended passages in response to writing prompts (targeted word production).
4. With practice, you should be able to make judgments about writing.
5. With practice, you should be able consider important ideas and how writing can impact our ability to express these ideas.

What are the core components of this section of the course?

Part I: Word Production

Part I of each day's work is an exercise in word production. How many words can you get on the page - without stopping? Your task is to take the word that is given to you and run with it...wherever your imagination takes you. Don't think...write. Don't fight the words...write the words. These exercises should help you if you have trouble getting words on the page. They will also help to build good writing habits.

I like to approach being a writer like being a musician. A musician picks up his or her instrument every single day and practices. A writer should pick up his or her pen every day and put it to paper. This section of the course provides new and experienced writers with writing prompts (single word prompts) to help you practice getting words on the page. The purpose of these writing exercises is to help you learn to get words on the page...without hesitation. Think of it as an exercise in word improvisation - just as a jazz musician improvises with notes.

Understand: Writing is Easy

Writing is easy. Very easy. You should be able to crank out 1,000 words or more in less than an hour. Every day. If you are struggling with your writing, you need to change how you are doing it. Maybe you should be using pen and paper instead of computer. Maybe you should be lying on bed instead of sitting at a desk. You need to figure out

how best to get words from your brain to onto paper or computer. Remove all impediments. Next, you need to understand that 1,000 words per day doesn't mean that these will be worthwhile, usable words. I routinely discard 1,000's of words when I rewrite and revise my writing. This is part of the creative process. Think of the thousands of words that you have written as a large block of marble. You must start chiseling away at the block until you have a statue – hopefully something that others will want to look at, not just your own fanciful creation.

You will find the writing prompts online. You can access them through Youtube or on the video course page.

Part II: Word Dissection: Understanding Words on the Page

In this section of the course, you will find a series of quotations from famous people. These are exercises in word dissection. Consider each quote. Your task is to paraphrase the quote (i.e., put it in your own words). Use a dictionary and/or thesaurus, as necessary.

The immediate aim is to have you dissect, and hopefully appreciate, some famous quotations. A secondary, and perhaps more important aim, is to expose you to history and culture. A good writer should have a broad understanding of both.

These exercises are intended for both beginning and more experienced writers. For beginning writers, these exercises will help you to see how the very best writers used language to express their thoughts. For more experienced writers, I give you these quotations so that you can savor their richness.

This is also a precursor to being able to properly evaluate the worth of your own writing (editing and revising). You have to know what someone is trying to say in order to judge how well he or she said it.

Part III: Word Production: Getting Words on the Page Part II

The purpose of these writing exercises is to help you practice the skills you learned in Word Production, Part I. I want you to be able to write – without hesitation and without thinking – in response to more specific writing prompts. Your task is to read a quote and a scene from a story, and then use these to write what happens next in the story.

Part IV: Word Worth: Judging Words on the Page

Part IV of each day's work is an exercise in making judgments about writing. Your task is to read several quotes and decide which is the best, and then explain your reasoning. Do you know good writing when you read it? Are you able to discern

excellence? How refined is your literary palate? The purpose of these exercises is to have you make judgments about famous quotations.

And expose you to more language, history, and culture in the form of these quotations. Who cares about history and culture?

"A lawyer without history or literature is a mechanic, a mere working mason; if he possesses some knowledge of these, he may venture to call himself an architect."

Sir Walter Scott

The same could be said of writers.

You will be given some quotes to read, usually two or three, and you must decide who said it better. For these exercises, you don't have to write out your answers, but you should be able to articulate some sort of rationale for your choices. Then, after you have decided who has best expressed a particular sentiment, compare your answers to mine. You may or may not agree, but it is a useful exercise in reading, discerning, appreciating, and comparing.

These exercises are another useful way to prepare you for the editing and revising of your own writing.

Note: You can do one or all of these exercises on a daily basis. Just as a musician does warm-up exercises before digging into musical practice, these exercises could be considered warm-up exercises for your writing practice. Use them as you see fit.

Note: You can do these exercises in a writing journal, or you can print the pages and write on the printed copies. Since this document is in PDF format, it is easy to print however many pages you need for each day's practice.

Part I:

Directions: This is an exercise in word production. How many words can you get on the page - without stopping? Your task is to take the word that I tell you and run with it...wherever your imagination takes you. Don't think...write. Don't fight the words...write the words.

Use a timer and/or stopwatch and write for one full minute. Without stopping. You can find the single word writing prompt on the *Etudes* course page which can be found online at penandpapercourse.com.

Part II:

Directions: This is an exercise in word dissection. Consider the quote below. Your task is to paraphrase the quote (i.e., put it in your own words). Use a dictionary and/or thesaurus, as necessary.

*"Friendship is constant in all other things
Save in the office and affairs of love..."*

William Shakespeare

Find my answer on page 82 in the Appendix

Part III:

Directions: This is an exercise in targeted word production. Consider the quote below. Below the quote is a scene from a story. Your task is to consider both the quote and the scene and to write what happens next in the story. Use your imagination.

*"Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind,
And therefore is wing'd Cupid painted blind."*

William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act I

"Do you really think that it's a good idea...to marry him? You know that he comes with a lot of baggage. Like a lot of baggage. Like, he has to pay for two plane fares when he goes on a trip because he's got so much baggage."

Sarah ground her teeth in frustration. She'd already had this conversation with her brother...and her mother. And now she was having this conversation with her best friend. She was tired of it.

"I'm going to marry him," she said. "I don't care about his past. People can change. People do change. He's changed. He's not the same person that he was. I know. I know it in my heart."

What happens next?

Part IV:

Directions: This is an exercise in making judgments about writing. Consider the quotes below. All three quotes deal with the idea of love. Your task is to read each quote and decide which is the best. Explain your reasoning. In order to make your decision, make sure that you understand what each writer is trying to convey.

*“The wounds invisible,
That love’s keen arrows make.”*

William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*

“Who can give law to lovers? Love is a greater law to itself.”

Boethius, *Philosophiae*

“To be loved, be lovable.”

Ovid, *Ars Amatoria*

Who said it better - Shakespeare, Boethius, or Ovid? _____

Click on the link at the bottom of the page to see my answer to the question.

Explain your reasoning in the space provided below.

Find my answer on page 102 in the Appendix

Part I:

Directions: This is an exercise in word production. How many words can you get on the page - without stopping? Your task is to take the word that I tell you and run with it...wherever your imagination takes you. Don't think...write. Don't fight the words...write the words.

Use a timer and/or stopwatch and write for one full minute. Without stopping. You can find the single word writing prompt on the *Etudes* course page which can be found online at penandpapercourse.com.

Part II:

Directions: This is an exercise in word dissection. Consider the quote below. Your task is to paraphrase the quote (i.e., put it in your own words). Use a dictionary and/or thesaurus, as necessary.

"I know I have the body of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a king, and of a king of England too; and think foul scorn that Parma or Spain, or any prince of Europe, should dare to invade the borders of my realm."

Elizabeth I, *Speech to the troops at Tilbury on the approach of the Armada*

Find my answer on page 83 in the Appendix

Part I:

Directions: This is an exercise in word production. How many words can you get on the page - without stopping? Your task is to take the word that I tell you and run with it...wherever your imagination takes you. Don't think...write. Don't fight the words...write the words.

Use a timer and/or stopwatch and write for one full minute. Without stopping. You can find the single word writing prompt on the *Etudes* course page which can be found online at penandpapercourse.com.

Part II:

Directions: This is an exercise in word dissection. Consider the quote below. Your task is to paraphrase the quote (i.e., put it in your own words). Use a dictionary and/or thesaurus, as necessary.

"A man will turn over half a library to make one book."

Samuel Johnson, from *James Boswell, The Life of Samuel Johnson*

Find my answer on page 86 in the Appendix

Part III:

Directions: This is an exercise in targeted word production. Consider the quote below. Below the quote is a scene from a story. Your task is to consider both the quote and the scene and to write what happens next in the story. Use your imagination.

"*You tread upon my patience.*"

William Shakespeare, *King Henry IV, Part I, Act I, scene iii*

Samson stared at the kitten. He was annoyed - the human, not the feline.

For her part, the kitten was oblivious to her human's annoyance. She was fully absorbed in trying to attack his pen, and no quarter was being given. All of her tiny teeth and claws were being used in the assault.

He was trying to write. It was an exercise in futility. The kitten had boundless energy, and he had little time.

"There's no help for it," he said. "It's time to..."

What happens next?

Part IV:

Directions: This is an exercise in making judgments about writing. Consider the quotes below. Both quotes deal with the idea of reading/education/learning. Your task is to read each quote and decide which is better. Explain your reasoning. In order to make your decision, make sure that you understand what each writer is trying to convey.

"A man ought to read just as inclination leads him; for what he reads as a task will do him little good."

from James Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson*

"Bodily exercise, when compulsory, does no harm to the body; but knowledge which is acquired under compulsion obtains no hold on the mind."

Plato, *Republic*

Who said it better - Boswell/Johnson or Plato? _____

Click on the link at the bottom of the page to see my answer to the question.

Explain your reasoning in the space provided below.

Find my answer on page 106 in the Appendix

Part I:

Directions: This is an exercise in word production. How many words can you get on the page - without stopping? Your task is to take the word that I tell you and run with it...wherever your imagination takes you. Don't think...write. Don't fight the words...write the words.

Use a timer and/or stopwatch and write for three full minutes. Without stopping. You can find the single word writing prompt on the *Etudes* course page which can be found online at penandpapercourse.com.

You can see what I wrote on page 66 in the Appendix.

Part II:

Directions: This is an exercise in word dissection. Consider the quote below. Your task is to paraphrase the quote (i.e., put it in your own words). Use a dictionary and/or thesaurus, as necessary.

"No man who has once heartily and wholly laughed can be altogether irreclaimably bad."

Thomas Carlyle

Find my answer on page 87 in the Appendix

Part III:

Directions: This is an exercise in targeted word production. Consider the quote below. Below the quote is a scene from a story. Your task is to consider both the quote and the scene and to write what happens next in the story. Use your imagination.

"Thou art my hope in the day of evil."

The Holy Bible, Ezekiel, 17:17

"This isn't going to work," I said. "It doesn't matter how many times we try. It's still not going to work."

Jill shook her head, not looking at me. She was concentrating.

"It is going to work," she said through gritted teeth. "Watch me."

I shrugged.

"Besides," she said, stopping to favor me with a glare. "If it doesn't work, then you know what happens...to us all."

What happens next?

Part IV:

Directions: This is an exercise in making judgments about writing. Consider the quotes below. All three quotes deal with the idea of hope. Your task is to read each quote and decide which is the best. Explain your reasoning. In order to make your decision, make sure that you understand what each writer is trying to convey.

“Hope is itself a species of happiness, and, perhaps, the chief happiness which this world affords: but, like all other pleasures immoderately enjoyed, the excesses of hope must be expiated by pain; and expectations improperly indulged must end in disappointment.”

Samuel Johnson, from James Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson*

*“True hope is swift, and flies with swallow’s wings:
Kings it makes gods, and meaner creatures kings.”*

William Shakespeare, *Richard III*

“Hope, deceitful though it be, is at least of this good use to us – that while we are traveling through this life, it conducts us by an easier and more pleasant way to our journey’s end.”

François, Duc De La Rochefoucauld, *Moral Maxims and Reflections*

Who said it better - Johnson, Shakespeare, or Rochefoucauld?_____

Click on the link at the bottom of the page to see my answer to the question.

Explain your reasoning in the space provided below.

Find my answer on page 107 in the Appendix

Part I:

Directions: This is an exercise in word production. How many words can you get on the page - without stopping? Your task is to take the word that I tell you and run with it...wherever your imagination takes you. Don't think...write. Don't fight the words...write the words.

Use a timer and/or stopwatch and write for three full minutes. Without stopping. You can find the single word writing prompt on the *Etudes* course page which can be found online at penandpapercourse.com.

You can see what I wrote on page 67 in the Appendix.

Part II:

Directions: This is an exercise in word dissection. Consider the quote below. Your task is to paraphrase the quote (i.e., put it in your own words). Use a dictionary and/or thesaurus, as necessary.

"What other dungeon is so dark as one's own heart! What jailer so inexorable as one's self!"

Nathaniel Hawthorn, *The House of the Seven Gables*

Find my answer on page 88 in the Appendix

Part III:

Directions: This is an exercise in targeted word production. Consider the quote below. Below the quote is a scene from a story. Your task is to consider both the quote and the scene and to write what happens next in the story. Use your imagination.

"Great grief is a divine and terrible radiance which transfigures the wretched."

Victor Hugo, *Les Misérables*

Vanessa collapsed. There was no one to catch her as she sighed and went limp. The news too much. Too much for her to bear. Too much for anyone to bear.

When Michael found her there, tears welled in his eyes as he gathered her up in his arms and held her.

Her body was still limp as she let herself be held. And sobbed.

What happens next?

Part IV:

Directions: This is an exercise in making judgments about writing. Consider the quotes below. Both quotes deal with the idea of freedom (of thought). Your task is to read each quote and decide which is better. Explain your reasoning. In order to make your decision, make sure that you understand what each writer is trying to convey.

*"Of all the tyrannies on human kind
The worst is that which persecutes the mind."*

John Dryden, *The Hind and the Panther*

"Liberty of thought is the life of the soul."

Voltaire, *Essay on Epic Poetry*

Who said it better - Dryden or Voltaire? _____

Click on the link at the bottom of the page to see my answer to the question.

Explain your reasoning in the space provided below.

Find my answer on page 108 in the Appendix

Part I:

Directions: This is an exercise in word production. How many words can you get on the page - without stopping? Your task is to take the word that I tell you and run with it...wherever your imagination takes you. Don't think...write. Don't fight the words...write the words.

Use a timer and/or stopwatch and write for three full minutes. Without stopping. You can find the single word writing prompt on the *Etudes* course page which can be found online at penandpapercourse.com.

You can see what I wrote on page 68 in the Appendix.

Part II:

Directions: This is an exercise in word dissection. Consider the quote below. Your task is to paraphrase the quote (i.e., put it in your own words). Use a dictionary and/or thesaurus, as necessary.

"Laws are like cobwebs, which may catch small flies, but let wasps and hornets break through."

Jonathan Swift, *A Critical Essay upon the Faculties of the Mind*

Find my answer on page 89 in the Appendix

Part III:

Directions: This is an exercise in targeted word production. Consider the quote below. Below the quote is a scene from a story. Your task is to consider both the quote and the scene and to write what happens next in the story. Use your imagination.

*"Thou call'dst me dog before thou hadst cause,
But, since I am a dog, beware my fangs."*

William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, Act III, scene iii

"Really?" she said, leaning forward and staring intently at the man across the table.

He said nothing.

"You're really asking for my help? After what you said. After what you did."

He continued to stare, unblinking. Hopeful.

Unfortunately for the man, his hopes were about to be dashed. Madame Alembert's eyes hardened. Ice dripped from her words.

"Not only will I not help you, but I will see to it that you..."

What happens next?

Part IV:

Directions: This is an exercise in making judgments about writing. Consider the quotes below. All three quotes deal with the idea of law and wealth. Your task is to read each quote and decide which is the best. Explain your reasoning. In order to make your decision, make sure that you understand what each writer is trying to convey.

“Laws grind the poor, and rich men rule the law.”

Oliver Goldsmith

“Anacharsis laughed at him (Solon) for imagining the dishonesty and covetousness of his countrymen could be restrained by written laws, which were like spiders’ webs, and would catch, it is true, the weak and poor, but easily be broken by the mighty and rich.”

Anacharsis

“Lawsuit, n. a machine which you go in as a pig and come out as a sausage.”

Ambrose Bierce

Who said it better - Goldsmith, Anacharsis, or Bierce? _____

Click on the link at the bottom of the page to see my answer to the question.

Explain your reasoning in the space provided below.

Find my answer on page 109 in the Appendix

Part I:

Directions: This is an exercise in word production. How many words can you get on the page - without stopping? Your task is to take the word that I tell you and run with it...wherever your imagination takes you. Don't think...write. Don't fight the words...write the words.

Use a timer and/or stopwatch and write for three full minutes. Without stopping. You can find the single word writing prompt on the *Etudes* course page which can be found online at penandpapercourse.com.

You can see what I wrote on page 69 in the Appendix.

Part II:

Directions: This is an exercise in word dissection. Consider the quote below. Your task is to paraphrase the quote (i.e., put it in your own words). Use a dictionary and/or thesaurus, as necessary.

"Wealth is the parent of luxury and indolence, and poverty of meanness and viciousness, and both of discontent."

Plato

Find my answer on page 90 in the Appendix

Part III:

Directions: This is an exercise in targeted word production. Consider the quote below. Below the quote is a scene from a story. Your task is to consider both the quote and the scene and to write what happens next in the story. Use your imagination.

"You are young, my son, and, as the years go by, time will change and even reverse many of your present opinions. Refrain therefore awhile from setting yourself up as a judge of the highest matters."

Plato, *Laws*, 888

"I'm right," he said through gritted teeth. "I know I'm right. And there's nothing that you can say or do that's going to make me change my mind. Do you understand?"

The old man nodded. He did understand. He understood all too well. He knew that some things had to be experienced in order to be accepted and appreciated.

"Well then," he said. "Go ahead. Do it. But don't say that I didn't warn you."

What happens next?

Part IV:

Directions: This is an exercise in making judgments about writing. Consider the quotes below. All three quotes deal with the idea of honor. Your task is to read each quote and decide which is the best. Explain your reasoning. In order to make your decision, make sure that you understand what each writer is trying to convey.

"The louder he talked of his honor, the faster we counted our spoons."

Ralph Waldo Emerson, from *The Conduct of Life*

"As material fortune is associated with the prosperity of the body, so honor belongs to those of the soul."

Ptolemy, from *Tetrabiblos*

"Never esteem anything as of advantage to you that will make you break your word or lose your self-respect."

Marcus Aurelius

Who said it better - Emerson, Ptolemy or Marcus Aurelius? _____

Click on the link at the bottom of the page to see my answer to the question.

Explain your reasoning in the space provided below.

Find my answer on page 110 in the Appendix

Part I:

Directions: This is an exercise in word production. How many words can you get on the page - without stopping? Your task is to take the word that I tell you and run with it...wherever your imagination takes you. Don't think...write. Don't fight the words...write the words.

Use a timer and/or stopwatch and write for three full minutes. Without stopping. You can find the single word writing prompt on the *Etudes* course page which can be found online at penandpapercourse.com.

You can see what I wrote on page 70 in the Appendix.

Part II:

Directions: This is an exercise in word dissection. Consider the quote below. Your task is to paraphrase the quote (i.e., put it in your own words). Use a dictionary and/or thesaurus, as necessary.

"A sharp tongue is the only edged tool that grows keener with constant use."

Washington Irving, *The Sketch Book. Rip Van Winkle*

Find my answer on page 91 in the Appendix

Part III:

Directions: This is an exercise in targeted word production. Consider the quote below. Below the quote is a scene from a story. Your task is to consider both the quote and the scene and to write what happens next in the story. Use your imagination.

"Anger is an acid that can do more harm to the vessel in which it is stored than to anything on which it is poured."

Mark Twain

Jamie seethed with anger.

"I'll see to it that..." She searched for the words. But couldn't find expression for the unrelenting rage that filled her soul with a thirst for vengeance.

"She'll pay," she whispered. "And pay and pay and pay for what's she's done. I won't rest until..."

What happens next?

Part IV:

Directions: This is an exercise in making judgments about writing. Consider the quotes below. Your task is to read each quote and decide which is better. In order to make your decision, make sure that you understand what each writer is trying to convey.

In both quotes, the speaker/writer insults another person. Who does it better? Explain your reasoning.

"The atrocious crime of being a young man, which the honorable gentleman (Warpole) has with such spirit and decency charged upon me, I shall neither attempt to palliate nor deny; but content myself with wishing that I may be one of those whose follies may cease with their youth, and not of that number who are ignorant in spite of experience."

William Pitt, Earl of Chatham, *Speech in the House of Commons*, March 6, 1741.

"Sherry (Thomas Sheridan) is dull, naturally dull; but it must have taken him a great deal of pains to become what we now see him. Such an excess of stupidity, sir, is not in Nature."

Samuel Johnson, from Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson*

Who said it better - Pitt or Johnson? _____

Click on the link at the bottom of the page to see my answer to the question.

Explain your reasoning in the space provided below.

Find my answer on page 111 in the Appendix

Part I:

Directions: This is an exercise in word production. How many words can you get on the page - without stopping? Your task is to take the word that I tell you and run with it...wherever your imagination takes you. Don't think...write. Don't fight the words...write the words.

Use a timer and/or stopwatch and write for three full minutes. Without stopping. You can find the single word writing prompt on the *Etudes* course page which can be found online at penandpapercourse.com.

You can see what I wrote on page 71 in the Appendix.

Part II:

Directions: This is an exercise in word dissection. Consider the quote below. Your task is to paraphrase the quote (i.e., put it in your own words). Use a dictionary and/or thesaurus, as necessary.

"I shall cheerfully bear the reproach of having descended below the dignity of history."

Thomas Babington, Lord Macaulay

Find my answer on page 92 in the Appendix

Part III:

Directions: This is an exercise in targeted word production. Consider the quote below. Below the quote is a scene from a story. Your task is to consider both the quote and the scene and to write what happens next in the story. Use your imagination.

"No terms except an unconditional and immediate surrender can be accepted. I propose to move immediately upon your works."

Ulysses S. Grant, *To General S.B. Buckner, Fort Donelson*

"I won't lose another soldier," the commanding officer said.

"But sir..."

General Buckner held up a hand.

His subordinate persisted. "We have food and ammunition. Enough to last until..."

"Until what?" Buckner interrupted. "Until reinforcements arrive? And then what? Will they break through our enemy's lines?"

"But there is always hope."

The general motioned for an orderly. "Agreed," he said. "But there are some things that are more important than hope. Like..."

What happens next?

Part IV:

Directions: This is an exercise in making judgments about writing. Consider the quotes below. Both quotes deal with the idea of faith. Your task is to read each quote and decide which is better. Explain your reasoning. In order to make your decision, make sure that you understand what each writer is trying to convey.

"The only faith that wears well and holds its color in all weathers, is that which is woven of conviction and set with the sharp mordant of experience."

James Russell Lowell

"Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

New Testament, Hebrews

Who said it better - Lowell or the New Testament? _____

Click on the link at the bottom of the page to see my answer to the question.

Explain your reasoning in the space provided below.

Find my answer on page 112 in the Appendix

Part I:

Directions: This is an exercise in word production. How many words can you get on the page - without stopping? Your task is to take the word that I tell you and run with it...wherever your imagination takes you. Don't think...write. Don't fight the words...write the words.

Use a timer and/or stopwatch and write for three full minutes. Without stopping. You can find the single word writing prompt on the *Etudes* course page which can be found online at penandpapercourse.com.

You can see what I wrote on page 72 in the Appendix.

Part II:

Directions: This is an exercise in word dissection. Consider the quote below. Your task is to paraphrase the quote (i.e., put it in your own words). Use a dictionary and/or thesaurus, as necessary.

"Men never do evil so completely and cheerfully as when they do it from religious conviction."

Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*

Find my answer on page 93 in the Appendix

Part IV:

Directions: This is an exercise in making judgments about writing. Consider the quotes below. All three quotes deal with the idea of democracy. Your task is to read each quote and decide which is the best. Explain your reasoning. In order to make your decision, make sure that you understand what each writer is trying to convey.

"Democracy will prevail when men believe the vote of Judas as good as that of Jesus Christ."

Thomas Carlyle

"Many forms of Government have been tried, and will be tried in this world of sin and woe. No one pretends that democracy is perfect or all-wise. Indeed, it has been said that democracy is the worst form of Government except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time."

Winston Churchill

"Democracy, which is a charming form of government, full of variety and disorder, and dispensing a sort of equality to equals and unequals alike."

Plato

Who said it better - Carlyle, Churchill, or Plato? _____

Click on the link at the bottom of the page to see my answer to the question.

Explain your reasoning in the space provided below.

Find my answer on page 113 in the Appendix

Part I:

Directions: This is an exercise in word production. How many words can you get on the page - without stopping? Your task is to take the word that I tell you and run with it...wherever your imagination takes you. Don't think...write. Don't fight the words...write the words.

Use a timer and/or stopwatch and write for three full minutes. Without stopping. You can find the single word writing prompt on the *Etudes* course page which can be found online at penandpapercourse.com.

You can see what I wrote on page 73 in the Appendix.

Part II:

Directions: This is an exercise in word dissection. Consider the quote below. Your task is to paraphrase the quote (i.e., put it in your own words). Use a dictionary and/or thesaurus, as necessary.

"Learning will be cast into the mire, and trodden down under the hoofs of a swinish multitude."

Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*

Find my answer on page 94 in the Appendix

Part IV:

Directions: This is an exercise in making judgments about writing. Consider the quotes below. Both quotes deal with the idea of dishonesty. Your task is to read each quote and decide which is better. Explain your reasoning. In order to make your decision, make sure that you understand what each writer is trying to convey.

"Men use thought only to justify their wrongdoings, and speech only to conceal their thoughts."

Voltaire, *Dialogue 14. Le Chapon et la Poularde*

*"And thus I clothe my naked villany
With odd old ends stol'n forth of holy writ,
And seem a saint when most I play the devil."*

William Shakespeare, *King Richard III*

Who said it better - Voltaire or Shakespeare? _____

Click on the link at the bottom of the page to see my answer to the question.

Explain your reasoning in the space provided below.

Find my answer on page 114 in the Appendix

Part I:

Directions: This is an exercise in word production. How many words can you get on the page - without stopping? Your task is to take the word that I tell you and run with it...wherever your imagination takes you. Don't think...write. Don't fight the words...write the words.

Use a timer and/or stopwatch and write for three full minutes. Without stopping. You can find the single word writing prompt on the *Etudes* course page which can be found online at penandpapercourse.com.

You can see what I wrote on page 74 in the Appendix.

Part II:

Directions: This is an exercise in word dissection. Consider the quote below. Your task is to paraphrase the quote (i.e., put it in your own words). Use a dictionary and/or thesaurus, as necessary.

"Freedom can exist only in the society of knowledge. Without learning, men are incapable of knowing their rights, and where learning is confined to a few people, liberty can be neither equal nor universal."

Benjamin Rush, 1786

Find my answer on page 95 in the Appendix

Part III:

Directions: This is an exercise in targeted word production. Consider the quote below. Below the quote is a scene from a story. Your task is to consider both the quote and the scene and to write what happens next in the story. Use your imagination.

"Nothing in life is so exhilarating as to be shot at without result."

Winston Churchill, *The Malakand Field Force*

"You really think that's a good idea?"

Max ignored him. He kept looking though the desk drawer for unspent cartridges. When he couldn't find any he snapped at his brother.

"Do you really think that it's a good idea to take a knife to a gun fight?"

"Who said there's gonna be a fight?"

Max shook his head.

"You know as well as I do that those Mitchell boys have been itching for a fight. And not a fist fight either."

What happens next?

Part IV:

Directions: This is an exercise in making judgments about writing. Consider the quotes below. All three quotes deal with the ideas of freedom and economics. Your task is to read each quote and decide which is the best. Explain your reasoning. In order to make your decision, make sure that you understand what each writer is trying to convey.

"Freedom in economic arrangements is itself a component of freedom broadly understood, so economic freedom is an end in itself...Economic freedom is also an indispensable means toward the achievement of political freedom."

Milton Friedman

"The system of private property is the most important guaranty of freedom, not only for those who own property, but scarcely less for those who do not."

Friedrich August von Hayek

"Everybody thinks of economics whether he is aware of it or not. In joining a political party and in casting his ballot, the citizen implicitly takes a stand upon essential economic theories."

Lugwig von Mises

Who said it better - Friedman, Hayek, or Mises?_____

Click on the link at the bottom of the page to see my answer to the question.

Explain your reasoning in the space provided below.

Find my answer on page 115 in the Appendix

Part I:

Directions: This is an exercise in word production. How many words can you get on the page - without stopping? Your task is to take the word that I tell you and run with it...wherever your imagination takes you. Don't think...write. Don't fight the words...write the words.

Use a timer and/or stopwatch and write for three full minutes. Without stopping. You can find the single word writing prompt on the *Etudes* course page which can be found online at penandpapercourse.com.

You can see what I wrote on page 75 in the Appendix.

Part II:

Directions: This is an exercise in word dissection. Consider the quote below. Your task is to paraphrase the quote (i.e., put it in your own words). Use a dictionary and/or thesaurus, as necessary.

"The Puritan hated bear-baiting, not because it gave pain to the bear, but because it gave pleasure to the spectators."

Thomas Babington, Lord Macaulay, *History of England*

Find my answer on page 96 in the Appendix

Part III:

Directions: This is an exercise in targeted word production. Consider the quote below. Below the quote is a scene from a story. Your task is to consider both the quote and the scene and to write what happens next in the story. Use your imagination.

"The human race is a race of cowards; and I am not only marching in that procession but carrying a banner."

Mark Twain

I was halfway home when my phone sounded. I looked at the number and my heart start beating faster. In fact, racing.

"Hello?" I said.

"We've been activated," a voice said. "Report to the facility at once."

I would like to tell you that my first thoughts were heroic ones. Hardly. All I could think was, "I'm going to die in some awful prison riot. Please, God, don't let me die on the inside."

What happens next?

Part IV:

Directions: This is an exercise in making judgments about writing. Consider the quotes below. Both quotes deal with the ideas of faith and morality. Your task is to read each quote and decide which is better. Explain your reasoning. In order to make your decision, make sure that you understand what each writer is trying to convey.

"Of moral purpose I see no trace in Nature. That is an article of exclusively human manufacture – and very much to our credit."

Thomas Henry Huxley, *Aphorisms and Reflections*

"Faith: You can do very little with it, but you can do nothing without it."

Samuel Butler

Who said it better - Huxley or Butler? _____

Click on the link at the bottom of the page to see my answer to the question.

Explain your reasoning in the space provided below.

Find my answer on page 116 in the Appendix

Part I:

Directions: This is an exercise in word production. How many words can you get on the page - without stopping? Your task is to take the word that I tell you and run with it...wherever your imagination takes you. Don't think...write. Don't fight the words...write the words.

Use a timer and/or stopwatch and write for five full minutes. Without stopping. You can find the single word writing prompt on the *Etudes* course page which can be found online at penandpapercourse.com.

You can see what I wrote on page 76 in the Appendix.

Part II:

Directions: This is an exercise in word dissection. Consider the quote below. Your task is to paraphrase the quote (i.e., put it in your own words). Use a dictionary and/or thesaurus, as necessary.

"Doubts are more cruel than the worst truths."

Molière, *Le Misanthrope*

Find my answer on page 97 in the Appendix

Part III:

Directions: This is an exercise in targeted word production. Consider the quote below. Below the quote is a scene from a story. Your task is to consider both the quote and the scene and to write what happens next in the story. Use your imagination.

*"Let me have men about me that are fat,
Sleek-headed men and such as sleep a' nights.
Yond Cassius has a lean and hungry look,
He thinks too much; such men are dangerous."*

William Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*, Act I, scene II

The senator reached out and grasped the man's hand. And held it firmly.
"It's a pleasure to meet you," he said. The warmth of his smile and the crinkling in the corners of his eyes belied the cold distrust and distaste he felt for his supposed ally. Atchison was a fawning weasel of a man.
"Senator," Atchison said with a reverential bow. "I think that you will find me a most capable sort.."

What happens next?

Part IV:

Directions: This is an exercise in making judgments about writing. Consider the quotes below. All three quotes deal with the idea of politics and politicians. Your task is to read each quote and decide which is the best. Explain your reasoning. In order to make your decision, make sure that you understand what each writer is trying to convey.

"An honest politician is one who when he's bought stays bought."

Simon Cameron

"Politicians (are) a set of men who have interests aside from the interests of the people, and who, to say the most of them, are, taken as a mass, at least one long step removed from honest men. I say this with greater freedom because, being a politician myself, none can regard it as personal."

Abraham Lincoln

"It could probably be shown by facts and figures that there is no distinctly native American criminal class except Congress."

Mark Twain

Who said it better - Cameron, Lincoln, or Twain? _____

Click on the link at the bottom of the page to see my answer to the question.

Explain your reasoning in the space provided below.

Find my answer on page 117 in the Appendix

Part I:

Directions: This is an exercise in word production. How many words can you get on the page - without stopping? Your task is to take the word that I tell you and run with it...wherever your imagination takes you. Don't think...write. Don't fight the words...write the words.

Use a timer and/or stopwatch and write for five full minutes. Without stopping. You can find the single word writing prompt on the *Etudes* course page which can be found online at penandpapercourse.com.

You can see what I wrote on page 77 in the Appendix.

Part II:

Directions: This is an exercise in word dissection. Consider the quote below. Your task is to paraphrase the quote (i.e., put it in your own words). Use a dictionary and/or thesaurus, as necessary.

"Blessed is the man who, having nothing to say, abstains from giving in words evidence of the fact."

George Eliot, *Impressions of Theophrastus Such*

Find my answer on page 98 in the Appendix

Part III:

Directions: This is an exercise in targeted word production. Consider the quote below. Below the quote is a scene from a story. Your task is to consider both the quote and the scene and to write what happens next in the story. Use your imagination.

"The insane, on occasion, are not without their charms."

Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.

"One more word outta you, and I'm gonna..."

"Gonna what?" Mark said. "Do something about it?"

Jimmy just stared in disbelief. No one spoke to him that way. Not since, well...

What happens next?

Part IV:

Directions: This is an exercise in making judgments about writing. Consider the quotes below. Both quotes deal with the idea of evil. Your task is to read each quote and decide which is better. Explain your reasoning. In order to make your decision, make sure that you understand what each writer is trying to convey.

"No one becomes depraved in a moment."

Decimus Junius Juvenalis, *Satires*

*"Lady Macbeth: I am in blood
Stepp'd in so far, that, should I wade no more,
Returning were as tedious as go o'er."*

William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*

Who said it better - Juvenalis or Shakespeare? _____

Click on the link at the bottom of the page to see my answer to the question.

Explain your reasoning in the space provided below.

Find my answer on page 118 in the Appendix

Part I:

Directions: This is an exercise in word production. How many words can you get on the page - without stopping? Your task is to take the word that I tell you and run with it...wherever your imagination takes you. Don't think...write. Don't fight the words...write the words.

Use a timer and/or stopwatch and write for five full minutes. Without stopping. You can find the single word writing prompt on the *Etudes* course page which can be found online at penandpapercourse.com.

You can see what I wrote on page 78 in the Appendix.

Part II:

Directions: This is an exercise in word dissection. Consider the quote below. Your task is to paraphrase the quote (i.e., put it in your own words). Use a dictionary and/or thesaurus, as necessary.

"War involves in its progress such a train of unforeseen and unsusposed circumstances...that no human wisdom can calculate the end. It has but one thing certain, and that is to increase taxes."

Thomas Paine, *Prospects on the Rubicon*

Find my answer on page 99 in the Appendix

Part III:

Directions: This is an exercise in targeted word production. Consider the quote below. Below the quote is a scene from a story. Your task is to consider both the quote and the scene and to write what happens next in the story. Use your imagination.

"The scars of others should teach us caution."

Saint Jerome, *Letter 54*

"I know I shouldn't," I whispered. "I shouldn't do it. I've seen what happens."

But another other small voice - not the voice of reason - was telling me otherwise. It was telling me that I would be different. That my fate would somehow be different. Because I was special.

So I took a deep breath, steadfastly ignoring the voice of reason - which was screaming at me - and...

What happens next?

Part IV:

Directions: This is an exercise in making judgments about writing. Consider the quotes below. Both quotes deal with the idea of law(s) and human nature. Your task is to read each quote and decide which is better. Explain your reasoning. In order to make your decision, make sure that you understand what each writer is trying to convey.

“Whoever desires to found a state and give it laws, must start with assuming that all men are bad and ever ready to display their vicious nature, whenever they may find occasion for it.”

Niccolo Machiavelli, *Discourse Upon the First Ten Books of Livy*

“No laws, however stringent, can make the idle industrious, the thriftless provident, or the drunken sober.”

Samuel Smiles

Who said it better - Machiavelli or Smiles? _____

Click on the link at the bottom of the page to see my answer to the question.

Explain your reasoning in the space provided below.

Find my answer on page 119 in the Appendix

Part I:

Directions: This is an exercise in word production. How many words can you get on the page - without stopping? Your task is to take the word that I tell you and run with it...wherever your imagination takes you. Don't think...write. Don't fight the words...write the words.

Use a timer and/or stopwatch and write for five full minutes. Without stopping. You can find the single word writing prompt on the *Etudes* course page which can be found online at penandpapercourse.com.

You can see what I wrote on page 79 in the Appendix.

Part II:

Directions: This is an exercise in word dissection. Consider the quote below. Your task is to paraphrase the quote (i.e., put it in your own words). Use a dictionary and/or thesaurus, as necessary.

"Learning is not attained by chance, it must be sought for with ardor and attended to with diligence."

Abigail Adams, *Letter to John Quincy Adams*

Find my answer on page 100 in the Appendix

Part III:

Directions: This is an exercise in targeted word production. Consider the quote below. Below the quote is a scene from a story. Your task is to consider both the quote and the scene and to write what happens next in the story. Use your imagination.

“Great blunders are often made, like large ropes, of a multitude of fibers.”

Victor Hugo, *Les Misérables*

“Did you really do that?” Julia asked. “Did you really say that to her?”

Daniel shrugged. And didn’t look at her. He didn’t have the courage - or the decency - to look her in the eye. He was ashamed of himself.

Finally, he managed to say, “There’s too much...” And then stopped. He didn’t know what to say. Not without making the situation worse.

“Too much what?” Julia demanded.

What happens next?

Part IV:

Directions: This is an exercise in making judgments about writing. Consider the quotes below. Your task is to read each quote and decide which is better. In order to make your decision, make sure that you understand what each writer is trying to convey.

In both quotes, the authors offer a critique of another's writing. Who does it better? Explain your reasoning.

"His imagination resembled the wings of an ostrich. It enabled him to run, though not to soar."

Thomas Babington

"He delighted to tread upon the brink of meaning."

Samuel Johnson, *The Lives of Poets*

Who said it better - Babington or Johnson? _____

Click on the link at the bottom of the page to see my answer to the question.

Explain your reasoning in the space provided below.

Find my answer on page 120 in the Appendix

Part I:

Directions: This is an exercise in word production. How many words can you get on the page - without stopping? Your task is to take the word that I tell you and run with it...wherever your imagination takes you. Don't think...write. Don't fight the words...write the words.

Use a timer and/or stopwatch and write for five full minutes. Without stopping. You can find the single word writing prompt on the *Etudes* course page which can be found online at penandpapercourse.com.

You can see what I wrote on page 80 in the Appendix.

Part II:

Directions: This is an exercise in word dissection. Consider the quote below. Your task is to paraphrase the quote (i.e., put it in your own words). Use a dictionary and/or thesaurus, as necessary.

"What experience and history teach is this - that people and governments never have learned anything from history, or acted on principles deduced from it."

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel

Find my answer on page 101 in the Appendix

Part III:

Directions: This is an exercise in targeted word production. Consider the quote below. Below the quote is a scene from a story. Your task is to consider both the quote and the scene and to write what happens next in the story. Use your imagination.

*"Presume not that I am the thing I was,
For God doth know, so shall the world perceive,
That I have turn'd away my former self;
So will I those that kept me company."*

William Shakespeare, *Henry IV, Part II, Act V*

Mike sighed with relief.

"This isn't as bad as I thought it would be," he thought. "Giving up my old life. And starting a new one."

Then Maria appeared. The look on her face spelled doom. His doom. He looked around, desperate for an exit, but there was none. He was trapped.

What happens next?

Part IV:

Directions: This is an exercise in making judgments about writing. Consider the quotes below. Both quotes deal with the idea of freedom. Your task is to read each quote and decide which is better. Explain your reasoning. In order to make your decision, make sure that you understand what each writer is trying to convey.

"Necessity is the plea for every infringement of human freedom. It is the argument of tyrants; it is the creed of slaves."

William Pitt, speech in the House of Commons, 1783

"The best government is that where there are the fewest useless men."

Voltaire

Who said it better - Pitt or Voltaire? _____

Click on the link at the bottom of the page to see my answer to the question.

Explain your reasoning in the space provided below.

Find my answer on page 121 in the Appendix

Appendix

Part I:

Directions: This is an exercise in word production. How many words can you get on the page - without stopping? Your task is to take the word that I tell you and run with it...wherever your imagination takes you. Don't think...write. Don't fight the words...write the words.

Use a timer and/or stopwatch and write for three full minutes. Without stopping. Click on the video link to see your single word writing prompt.

The writing prompt for Day 6 was as follows: heart

This is what I wrote:

heart - heart of hearts oh what lies within? A hearty of gold, glass, stone, satin or silver. I should think that a heart of gold would be too heavy to carry around. And a heart of glass would be too brittle, like bones that break easily. What would I like my heart to be made of? Coffee beans? I smell the simmering sumptuous (spelling?) beans that have been ground and boiled, but is that what I want for my heart? To be ground by the vagaries of love? Perhaps a love unrequited. And thus I am boiled in the passions of my fervent love. But...

Part I:

Directions: This is an exercise in word production. How many words can you get on the page - without stopping? Your task is to take the word that I tell you and run with it...wherever your imagination takes you. Don't think...write. Don't fight the words...write the words.

Use a timer and/or stopwatch and write for three full minutes. Without stopping. Click on the video link to see your single word writing prompt.

The writing prompt for Day 7 was as follows: dungeon

This is what I wrote:

dungeon - as dark and dank as the darkest pit in Dordogne. Wait, that's in France. Now, I think of lilac fields and smooth rolling hills and fine foods, Paris, the Eiffel Tower and cycling. What happened to dungeons and castles and knights and the like? Knights of the Round Table. Do you know why Arthur chose a round table as opposed to one more rectangular in character? It says something about his character. Indeed, for he saw himself as not above his peers. Peerage - does that have something to do with knights, rank, titles, and such?

Part I:

Directions: This is an exercise in word production. How many words can you get on the page - without stopping? Your task is to take the word that I tell you and run with it...wherever your imagination takes you. Don't think...write. Don't fight the words...write the words.

Use a timer and/or stopwatch and write for three full minutes. Without stopping. Click on the video link to see your single word writing prompt.

The writing prompt for Day 8 was as follows: cobweb

This is what I wrote:

cobweb - caught in the shares of the web, the mighty fly struggles to flee - to free itself from the confines of its confinement. Naught can be done. His predicament is fraught with folly. Why ever did he elect to elope along the wings of the wind and let it carry him thus? To his doom? Nat! Fear not. This fly is a fearsome foe - not some feckless fool. He strains - he pulls. A wing? It is free. The spider feels the struggle on his trap. He grows nearer. The fly - with his many eyes - sees the predator and renews his fight...with renewed vigor. A second wing is free. And now for the final test, the final pull to free the fly. His feet. With a Herculean leap the fly breaks forth and again elopes upon the wings of the win and flies free.

Part I:

Directions: This is an exercise in word production. How many words can you get on the page - without stopping? Your task is to take the word that I tell you and run with it...wherever your imagination takes you. Don't think...write. Don't fight the words...write the words.

Use a timer and/or stopwatch and write for three full minutes. Without stopping. Click on the video link to see your single word writing prompt.

The writing prompt for Day 9 was as follows: content

This is what I wrote:

content - content or content. That is the question. Are we talking about happiness in the heart or words on the page? What is the better what to get words on the page? By asking a pig to hold my pen? Surely not. I would imagine that pig's penmanship would suffer as it has no thumb. A hoof, yes. Wait? Is a pig's foot a hoof? Not sure. I know that people pickle pig's feet and eat them. Waste not want not as they say. Too much bacon and you won't waste away. Your waist will grow larger in girth as do the words on the page when you shun the company of pigs and write your own words on your own pages.

Part I:

Directions: This is an exercise in word production. How many words can you get on the page - without stopping? Your task is to take the word that I tell you and run with it...wherever your imagination takes you. Don't think...write. Don't fight the words...write the words.

Use a timer and/or stopwatch and write for three full minutes. Without stopping. Click on the video link to see your single word writing prompt.

The writing prompt for Day 10 was as follows: keen

This is what I wrote:

keen - this is a hard word to get started. All I could think of was the keen edge of the sword. Samurai sword or a knight's long sword. No wait, this is writing and not fighting. What about the keen wit of the writer? His razor sharp intellect makes for a keen (kind) rapier-like pen. Reminds me of Voltaire. Now we're talking about the pen and the sword. Which is mightier? Certainly in the hands of a wit such as Voltaire the pen (wields) holds much sway in the courts of kings and beyond. But today? Does the pen provide solace or sorrow?

Part I:

Directions: This is an exercise in word production. How many words can you get on the page - without stopping? Your task is to take the word that I tell you and run with it...wherever your imagination takes you. Don't think...write. Don't fight the words...write the words.

Use a timer and/or stopwatch and write for three full minutes. Without stopping. Click on the video link to see your single word writing prompt.

The writing prompt for Day 11 was as follows: history

This is what I wrote:

history - writing with wet hands is not conducive to getting words on the page. My pardon. History. A record of what has been. Or at least a record of what has been - according to the historian - the one doing the writing. What is said historian has an ax to grind? What if his version of the events differs from the accounts of others? But I'm not talking about bank accounts. Accounts - the observations of others. How do we know if an historian is honest in his trade? We don't. And that is the honest answer about history. We can look at the words of several people...

Part I:

Directions: This is an exercise in word production. How many words can you get on the page - without stopping? Your task is to take the word that I tell you and run with it...wherever your imagination takes you. Don't think...write. Don't fight the words...write the words.

Use a timer and/or stopwatch and write for three full minutes. Without stopping. Click on the video link to see your single word writing prompt.

The writing prompt for Day 12 was as follows: conviction

This is what I wrote:

conviction - now we're talking! And I'm not talking about beliefs. We're talking crimes and convictions. When you are judged by a jury of your peers and found guilty then you are convicted. The firm conviction of the members of the jury is that you are guilty. Don't give up on your convictions, but don't become convicted of a crime. An institutional diet (on the inside) is not conducive to happiness. Nor is being behind bars. The mattress and blankets are too thin and uncomfortable and your company is not the best. The best food is food on the outs where you are free to cook as you please.

Part I:

Directions: This is an exercise in word production. How many words can you get on the page - without stopping? Your task is to take the word that I tell you and run with it...wherever your imagination takes you. Don't think...write. Don't fight the words...write the words.

Use a timer and/or stopwatch and write for three full minutes. Without stopping. Click on the video link to see your single word writing prompt.

The writing prompt for Day 13 was as follows: swine

This is what I wrote:

swine - swine are fine. I love the mud and the smell of pork rinds. Not really. I've never even sampled a rind. Too scared. What I do like are the personality of pigs. Reminds me of *Charlotte's Web*. Do you know what the author of said book said? There I go again - being clever. Don't try to be clever with your words. Just write. At any rate he said something along the lines of not knowing which bothered him more literature or chickens. Absurd! I've never known a chicken to be anything other than delicious. Fried, baked, or fricasseed. Matters not to me or my palate, plate, patron saint of chickens must be St. Cluckus.

Part I:

Directions: This is an exercise in word production. How many words can you get on the page - without stopping? Your task is to take the word that I tell you and run with it...wherever your imagination takes you. Don't think...write. Don't fight the words...write the words.

Use a timer and/or stopwatch and write for three full minutes. Without stopping. Click on the video link to see your single word writing prompt.

The writing prompt for Day 14 was as follows: right

This is what I wrote:

right - right, wright, rights. What are our rights. We have Miranda, she's a nice lady, I suppose. Just joking. More frivolity. Again our rights and right-of-way as we make our way through life. Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. What does this declaration declaim? Is that the right word? It declares freedom. Freedom from the king and freedom to forge ahead - found a new nation. Just as Lincoln would say 4 score and 20 years later at the dedication of a cemetery at Gettysburg. A quaint little town that became the epicenter of a ferocious battle.

Part I:

Directions: This is an exercise in word production. How many words can you get on the page - without stopping? Your task is to take the word that I tell you and run with it...wherever your imagination takes you. Don't think...write. Don't fight the words...write the words.

Use a timer and/or stopwatch and write for three full minutes. Without stopping. Click on the video link to see your single word writing prompt.

The writing prompt for Day 15 was as follows: bear

This is what I wrote:

bear - to bear the weight of a burden is a trying trial of torment for the soul. Better to bear up under the weight than to give up. There is always hope. This is our triumph of humanity - the gift of hope. We can always hope for better - strive for better and betterment. It is within our means to do so. Every day we should strive to bear our burdens and ease the burdens of others if we are so called - like doctors and nurses and the clergy. For there are burdens of the body, mind, and soul. The bear in the forest bites berries for breakfast. I long to see the Klondike - not...

Part I:

Directions: This is an exercise in word production. How many words can you get on the page - without stopping? Your task is to take the word that I tell you and run with it...wherever your imagination takes you. Don't think...write. Don't fight the words...write the words.

Use a timer and/or stopwatch and write for three full minutes. Without stopping. Click on the video link to see your single word writing prompt.

The writing prompt for Day 16 was as follows: truth

This is what I wrote:

truth - I shall write the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Unless I elect to lie. But lies do not warrant the truth. Or is it vice versa? I'm not sure now. So I shall endeavor to only type the truth lest you think me a vain and boastful creature not worthy of your mirth. Mirth indeed. Why am I writing about laughter when the topic at hand is something that I play fast and loose with. Only when it suits me. Not when I'm on the stand and called to testify. I'm running out of truth. Better get to the stand up and get a refuel because my tankard is running low. I need oil for the skids because the truth can be slippery indeed. Slippery like a well-oiled eel in the ocean. Sliding in and out of crevices - hiding from the light of an honest day. Like an honest politician who stays bought once he's paid for. What else can I say about a politician or history or eels on the heels - I am rocked back. Enough...

Part I:

Directions: This is an exercise in word production. How many words can you get on the page - without stopping? Your task is to take the word that I tell you and run with it...wherever your imagination takes you. Don't think...write. Don't fight the words...write the words.

Use a timer and/or stopwatch and write for three full minutes. Without stopping. Click on the video link to see your single word writing prompt.

The writing prompt for Day 17 was as follows: abstain

This is what I wrote:

abstain - to refrain, to exhibit self-control, hmmm what then do I need to refrain from doing? Speaking ill of others? Watching too much television? Rather I shall indulge. I shall indulge in doughnuts, delights of the deli such as sliced honey ham, layered upon a thick slice of bread, and slathered with rich spicy mustard. I can scent the pickles as I stack the brined cucumbers atop the ham. And what next? Cheese, of course! A slice or two (or ten) of Swiss. Not going skiing in the Alps, no sir. I am trekking atop the bread with a sample of Swiss, sure to miss if I don't add chips to the plate. Crispy kettle chips with salt and vinegar. And then what for dessert. The ham sandwich shall not be bereft of its companion dessert. Such would be a culinary crime. Savagery to a sandwich. The earl of snacking and more. Because I shall not abstain when food is at hand. I shall eat!

Part I:

Directions: This is an exercise in word production. How many words can you get on the page - without stopping? Your task is to take the word that I tell you and run with it...wherever your imagination takes you. Don't think...write. Don't fight the words...write the words.

Use a timer and/or stopwatch and write for three full minutes. Without stopping. Click on the video link to see your single word writing prompt.

The writing prompt for Day 18 was as follows: train

This is what I wrote:

train - a wagon train. A train of thought. Methinks thou thought too much. Of chickens. Lean and hungry chickens like Cassius whom Caesar did not entrust with his back. A train of senators did fall upon Caesar - it was the Ides of March. Beware! Lest your greed and ambition pluck you from your place as it did Caesar. Now we know him as a salad. With anchovies. I can't stand the fish, but I would have met the man. Certainly it would be fascinating to know the man who was Caesar - emperor of Rome. But no...alas the senators would see to it that he would not rule Rome. The city of 7 hills - was it seven? I know not as I am consumed with thoughts of vinegar and oil dousing the delicate fronds of lettuce. Let us all join hands, friends, Romans, countrymen. How much more of this madness can we take ere Pax Romana reigns again. Now we have poultry peace - Pax Pullus. because the chicken had to cross the road.

Part I:

Directions: This is an exercise in word production. How many words can you get on the page - without stopping? Your task is to take the word that I tell you and run with it...wherever your imagination takes you. Don't think...write. Don't fight the words...write the words.

Use a timer and/or stopwatch and write for three full minutes. Without stopping. Click on the video link to see your single word writing prompt.

The writing prompt for Day 19 was as follows: chance

This is what I wrote:

chance - ah, cruel chance! How so many bemoan the seeming random folly of chance. But I am no Mercutio (Romeo and Juliet reference 'cause I'm a teacher). I am no Fortune's fool. I wield a sword and swing it in charge of my own destiny. Destiny's child am I. Not the band/group, for I cannot sing except foolishness. No, rather I would chance upon a fortune in buried treasure but I would not bear a cutlass against a brace of buccaneers to find a treasure. I'm too much the coward to face Captain Kidd or Blackbeard with fire in his beard. Beard spitting gunpowder matches to frighten his foes. Those brave enough to test their metal against his mettle. No - sooner would meddle with a snake than a sea serpent such as a pirate captain traveling the seven seas with a crew full of carnivorous knaves who would make me walk the plank.

Part I:

Directions: This is an exercise in word production. How many words can you get on the page - without stopping? Your task is to take the word that I tell you and run with it...wherever your imagination takes you. Don't think...write. Don't fight the words...write the words.

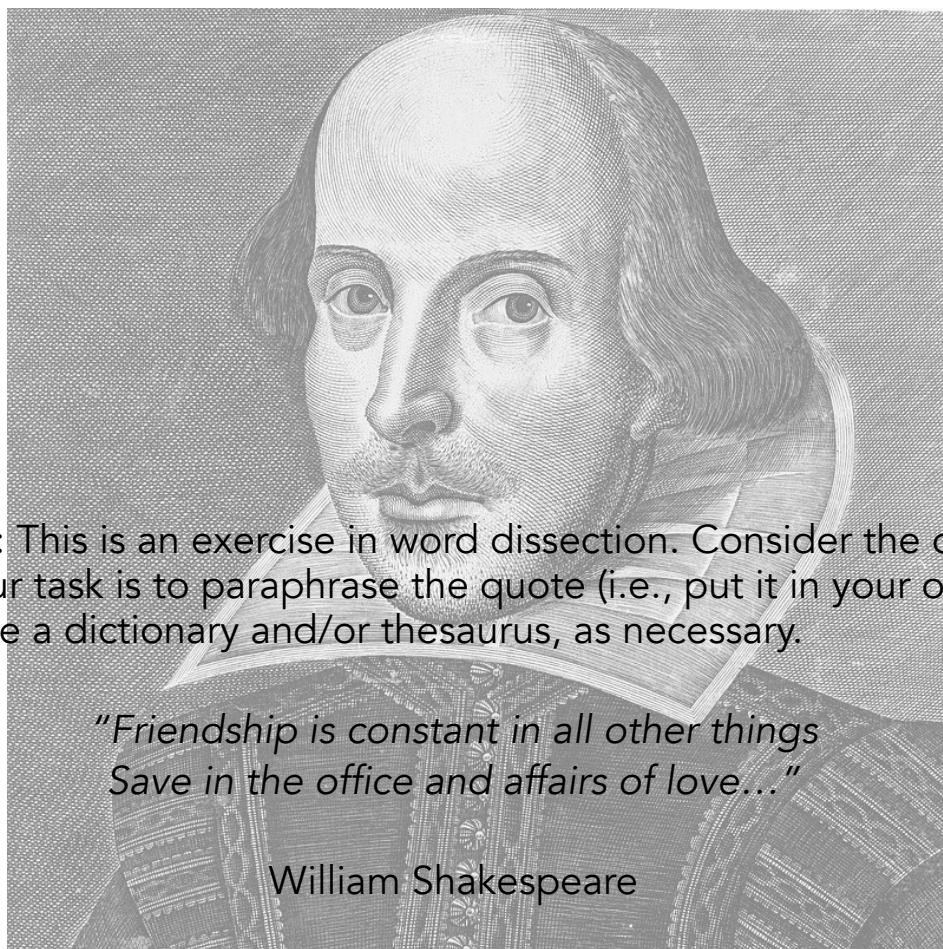
Use a timer and/or stopwatch and write for three full minutes. Without stopping. Click on the video link to see your single word writing prompt.

The writing prompt for Day 20 was as follows: experience

This is what I wrote:

experience - what experience do you have in life? Use this experience to your advantage. You should always be learning, growing, writing and more. Always. Read for reading is how you can learn of the experiences of others. A book is a distillation of another's learning. There is much to be learned from the folly of others. Most call it wisdom. As you grow you will gain your own wisdom in the form of successes and failures. Don't worry about the failures. If you fall down seven times, then get up eight. It is only when you give up that you stop gaining valuable experience. You must learn and grow so that you find your place in the world. Once you have a better semblance of your place in the world, only then will you live your life to the fullest. Again, seek experience. Travel the world so that you better understand (and appreciate) your home. Some answers can only be found when you have broad experience in life.

The following pages contain my answers to Parts II and IV of the daily writing exercises.



Part II:

Directions: This is an exercise in word dissection. Consider the quote below. Your task is to paraphrase the quote (i.e., put it in your own words). Use a dictionary and/or thesaurus, as necessary.

*"Friendship is constant in all other things
Save in the office and affairs of love..."*

William Shakespeare

Here's how I paraphrased and/or dissected the above quote:

First, I broke up the sentence into its various component parts, and then I tackled each part individually.

"Friendship is constant" means that friendship is unwavering, you can count on your friends

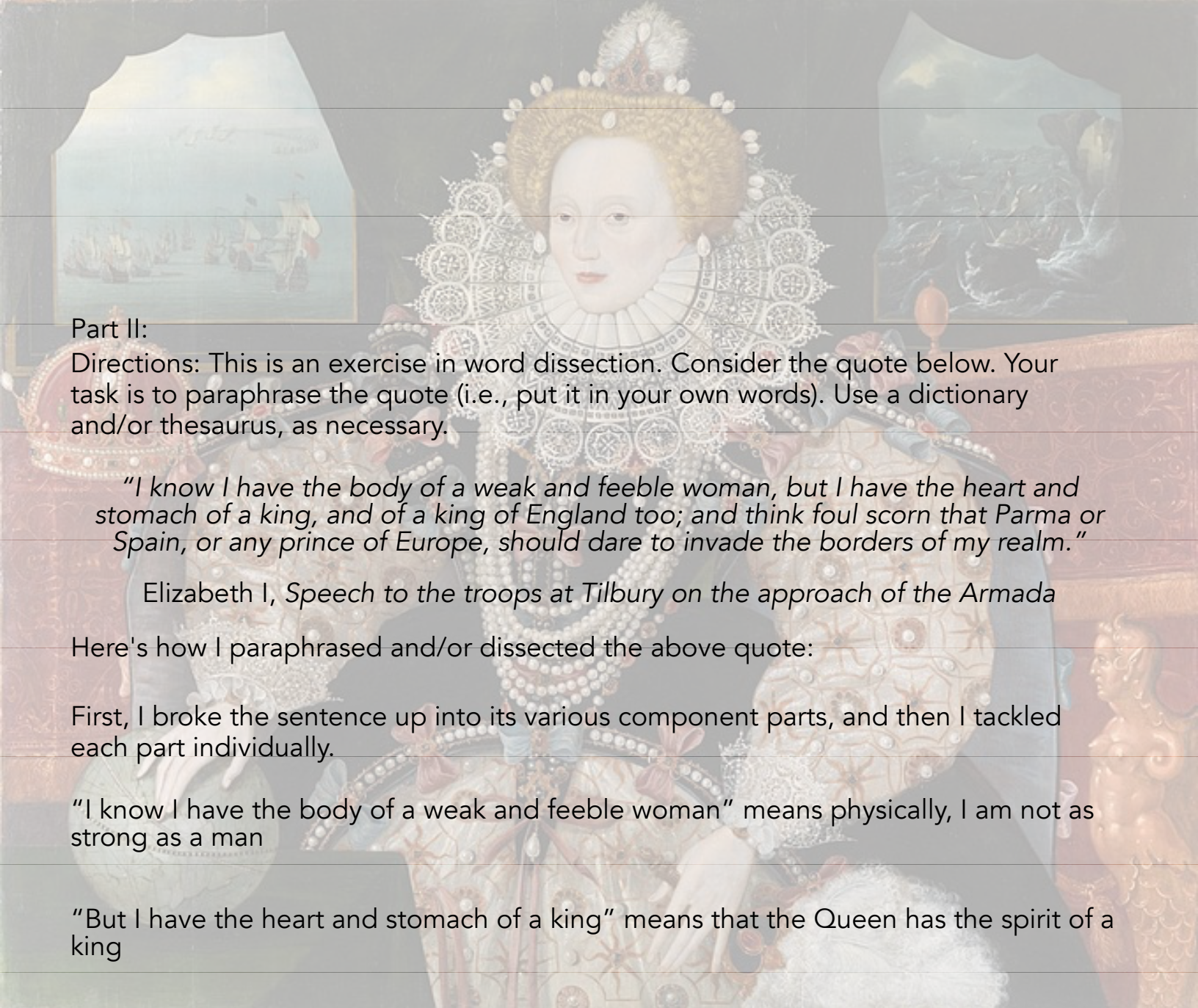
"in all other things" means "for just about anything"

"save" means "except"

"in the office and affairs of love" refers to "matters of the heart"

Lastly, I put all of the pieces back together and voilà, the final product looks like this:

You can count on your friends for just about anything, except when it comes to matters of the heart.



Part II:

Directions: This is an exercise in word dissection. Consider the quote below. Your task is to paraphrase the quote (i.e., put it in your own words). Use a dictionary and/or thesaurus, as necessary.

"I know I have the body of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a king, and of a king of England too; and think foul scorn that Parma or Spain, or any prince of Europe, should dare to invade the borders of my realm."

Elizabeth I, *Speech to the troops at Tilbury on the approach of the Armada*

Here's how I paraphrased and/or dissected the above quote:

First, I broke the sentence up into its various component parts, and then I tackled each part individually.

"I know I have the body of a weak and feeble woman" means physically, I am not as strong as a man

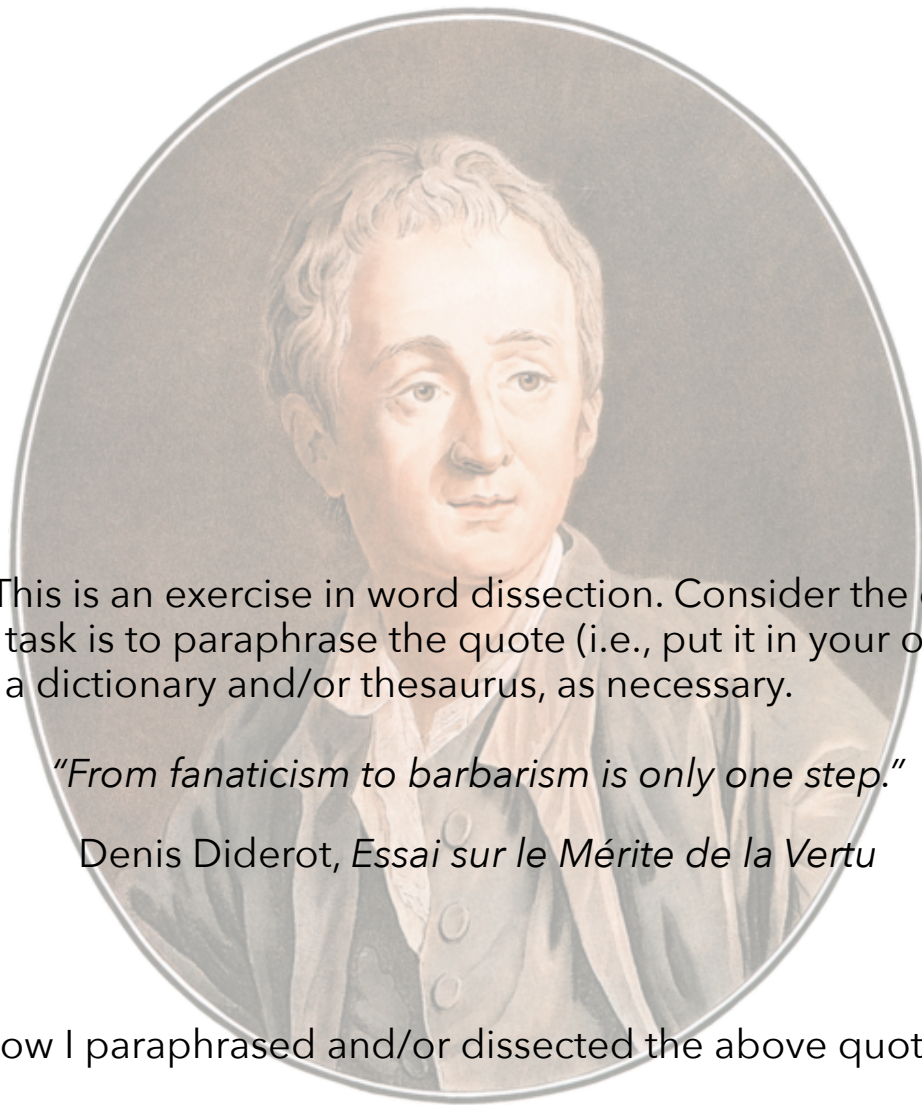
"But I have the heart and stomach of a king" means that the Queen has the spirit of a king

When the Queen thinks "foul scorn that Parma or Spain, or any prince of Europe" she is saying that she feels nothing but contempt for other rulers

"Should dare to invade the borders of my realm" means "who dares to attack England"

Lastly, I put all of the pieces back together and voilà, the final product looks like this:

Physically, I am not as strong as a man, but I have the spirit of a king and have nothing but contempt for any ruler who dares to attack England.



Part II:

Directions: This is an exercise in word dissection. Consider the quote below. Your task is to paraphrase the quote (i.e., put it in your own words). Use a dictionary and/or thesaurus, as necessary.

"From fanaticism to barbarism is only one step."

Denis Diderot, *Essai sur le Mérite de la Vertu*

Here's how I paraphrased and/or dissected the above quote:

What is a fanatic? Someone who holds extreme, and possibly unreasonable, beliefs

Barbarism is extremely cruel and unpleasant behavior.

"Only one step" suggests that there is not much difference between fanaticism and barbarism.

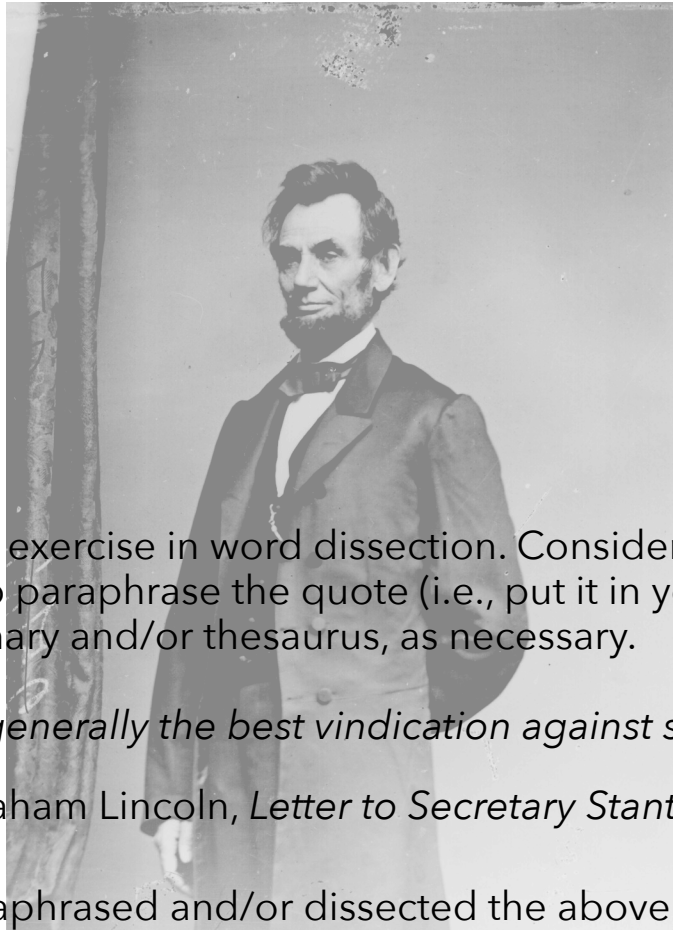
Lastly, I put all of the pieces back together and voilà, the final product looks like this:

Extreme beliefs often lead to extremely cruel actions.

or

Extreme beliefs easily lead to cruel and unjust behavior. Example: the Holocaust

Day 3



Part II:

Directions: This is an exercise in word dissection. Consider the quote below. Your task is to paraphrase the quote (i.e., put it in your own words). Use a dictionary and/or thesaurus, as necessary.

"Truth is generally the best vindication against slander."

Abraham Lincoln, *Letter to Secretary Stanton*

Here's how I paraphrased and/or dissected the above quote:

What does it mean to be vindicated? It means that you are proven correct.

Slander is a false statement about someone that damages their reputation.

Lastly, I put all of the pieces back together and voilà, the final product looks like this:

Telling the truth is the best way to disprove false statements about you.

or

The truth of the matter will prove you right in the face of lies.



Part II:

Directions: This is an exercise in word dissection. Consider the quote below. Your task is to paraphrase the quote (i.e., put it in your own words). Use a dictionary and/or thesaurus, as necessary.

"A man will turn over half a library to make one book."

Samuel Johnson, from *James Boswell, The Life of Samuel Johnson*

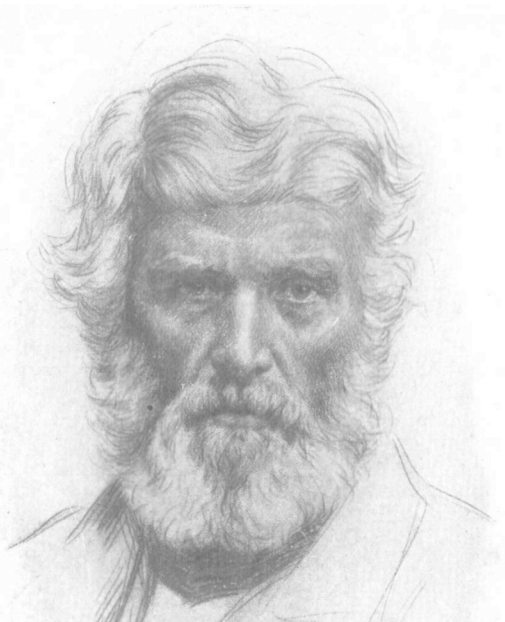
Here's how I paraphrased and/or dissected the above quote:

"A man" could be a person or a writer.

Turning over half a library implies that this person is reading or studying a great deal of books.

Lastly, I put all of the pieces back together and voilà, the final product looks like this:

A writer will read a great many books in order to write a single book.



Part II:

Directions: This is an exercise in word dissection. Consider the quote below. Your task is to paraphrase the quote (i.e., put it in your own words). Use a dictionary and/or thesaurus, as necessary.

"No man who has once heartily and wholly laughed can be altogether irreclaimably bad."

Thomas Carlyle

Here's how I paraphrased and/or dissected the above quote:

"No man" could read: "No one"

heartily: with enthusiasm

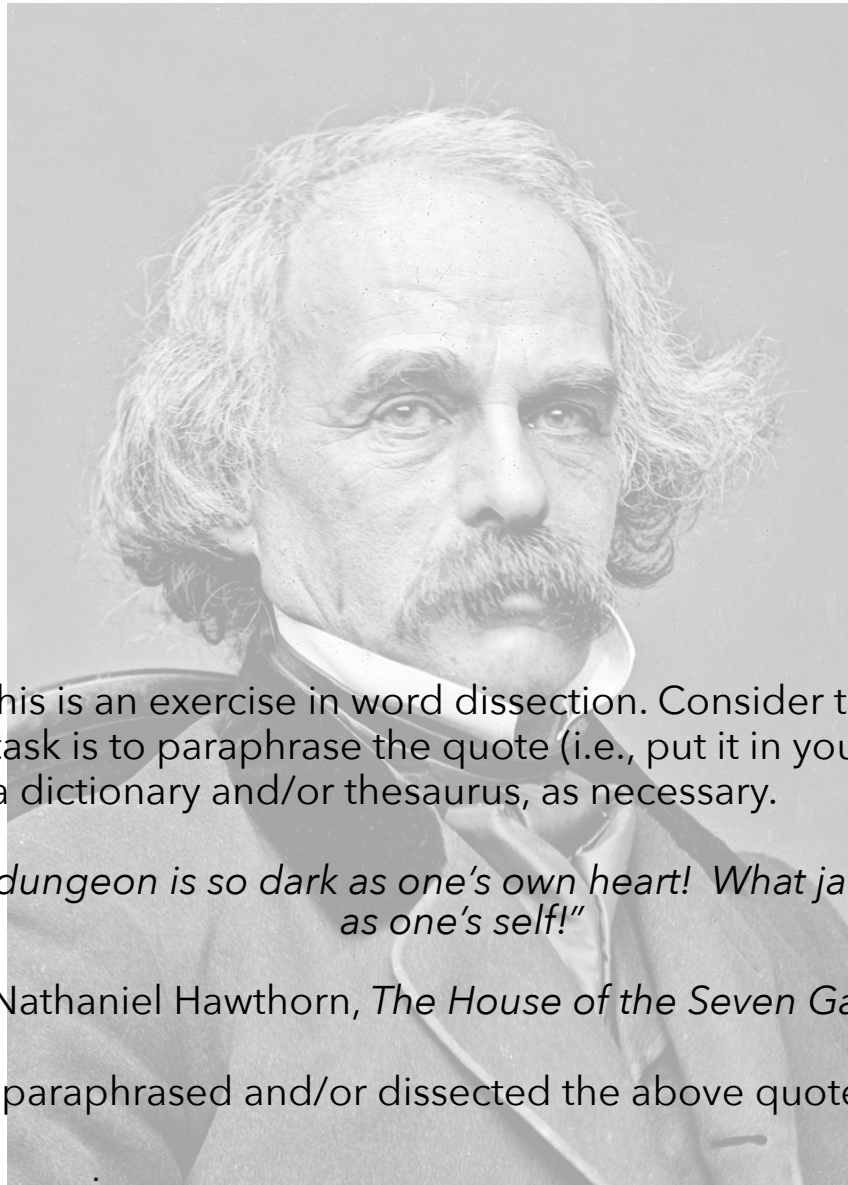
wholly: without reserve

altogether: entirely, utterly

Irreclaimably: cannot be redeemed, forever lost

Lastly, I put all of the pieces back together and voilà, the final product looks like this:

No one who has laughed - at least once - with great enthusiasm can be a completely and totally bad or horrible person.



Part II:

Directions: This is an exercise in word dissection. Consider the quote below. Your task is to paraphrase the quote (i.e., put it in your own words). Use a dictionary and/or thesaurus, as necessary.

"What other dungeon is so dark as one's own heart! What jailer so inexorable as one's self!"

Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The House of the Seven Gables*

Here's how I paraphrased and/or dissected the above quote:

A dungeon is a prison

"is so dark" means without hope

Our "heart" means our emotions

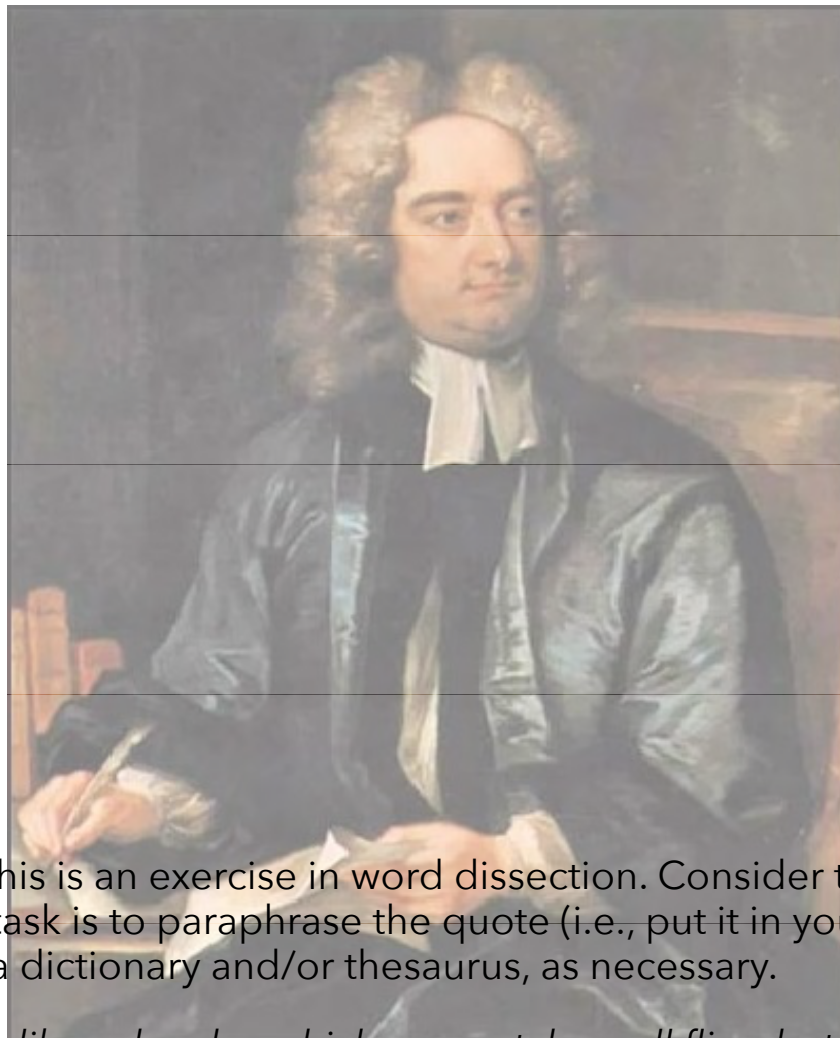
Inexorable means impossible to resist

"one's self" means one's thoughts.

Lastly, I put all of the pieces back together and voilà, the final product looks like this:

There is no darker prison than our own thoughts and emotions. We can't escape our own thoughts.

Day 7



Part II:

Directions: This is an exercise in word dissection. Consider the quote below. Your task is to paraphrase the quote (i.e., put it in your own words). Use a dictionary and/or thesaurus, as necessary.

"Laws are like cobwebs, which may catch small flies, but let wasps and hornets break through."

Jonathan Swift, *A Critical Essay upon the Faculties of the Mind*

Here's how I paraphrased and/or dissected the above quote:

"Laws" refers to the justice system

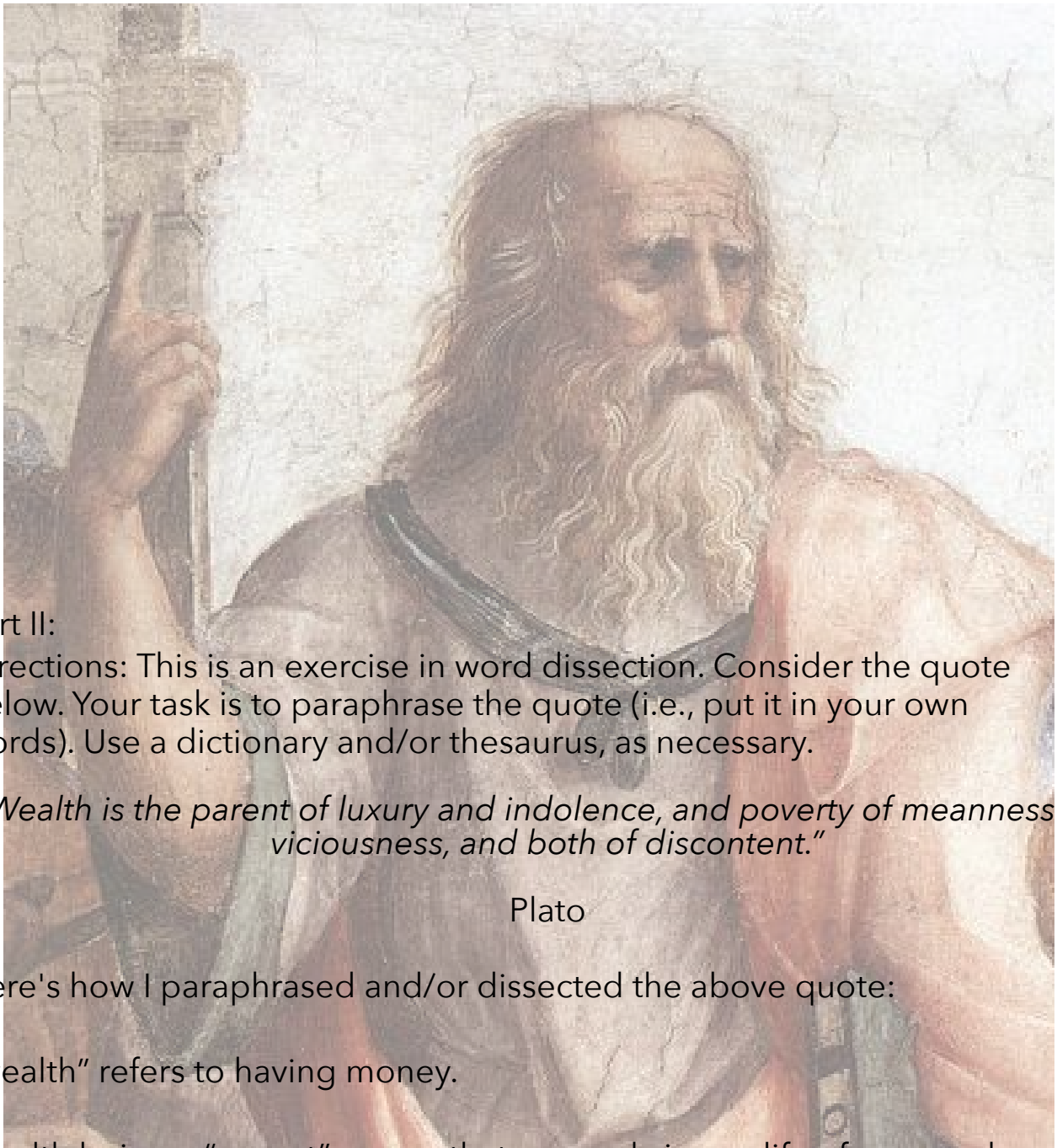
"small flies" refers to the weak and the poor

"wasps and hornets" refers to the strong, wealthy, powerful.

Lastly, I put all of the pieces back together and voilà, the final product looks like this:

The justice system serves the powerful/wealthy and punishes the poor/weak.

Day 8



Part II:

Directions: This is an exercise in word dissection. Consider the quote below. Your task is to paraphrase the quote (i.e., put it in your own words). Use a dictionary and/or thesaurus, as necessary.

"Wealth is the parent of luxury and indolence, and poverty of meanness and viciousness, and both of discontent."

Plato

Here's how I paraphrased and/or dissected the above quote:

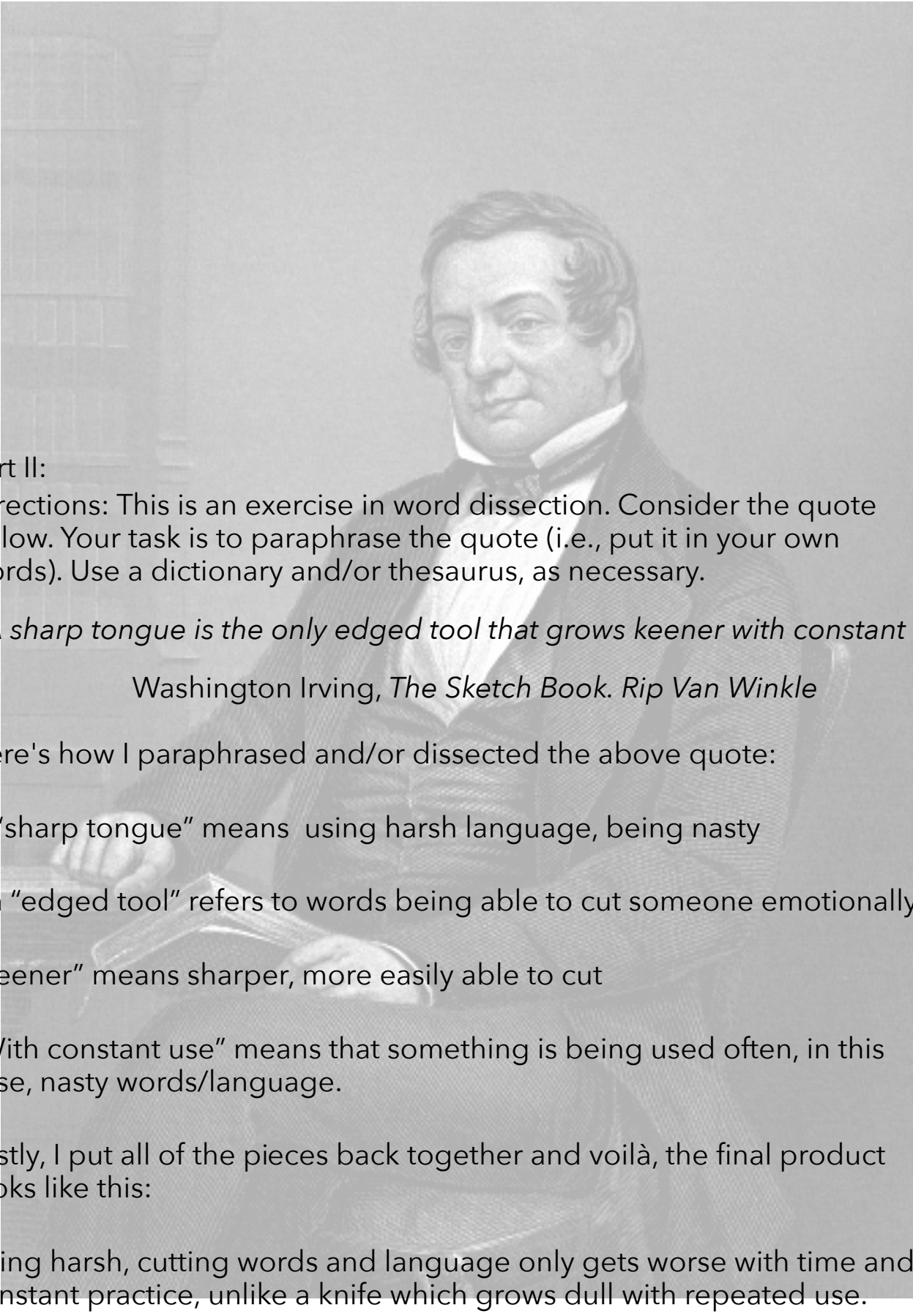
"wealth" refers to having money.

Wealth being a "parent" means that money brings a life of ease and comfort.

Being poor fosters cruelty.

Lastly, I put all of the pieces back together and voilà, the final product looks like this:

Money creates a life of ease, comfort, and laziness while poverty creates a life of hatefulness. Both money, and the lack thereof, create unhappiness.



Part II:

Directions: This is an exercise in word dissection. Consider the quote below. Your task is to paraphrase the quote (i.e., put it in your own words). Use a dictionary and/or thesaurus, as necessary.

"A sharp tongue is the only edged tool that grows keener with constant use."

Washington Irving, *The Sketch Book. Rip Van Winkle*

Here's how I paraphrased and/or dissected the above quote:

A "sharp tongue" means using harsh language, being nasty

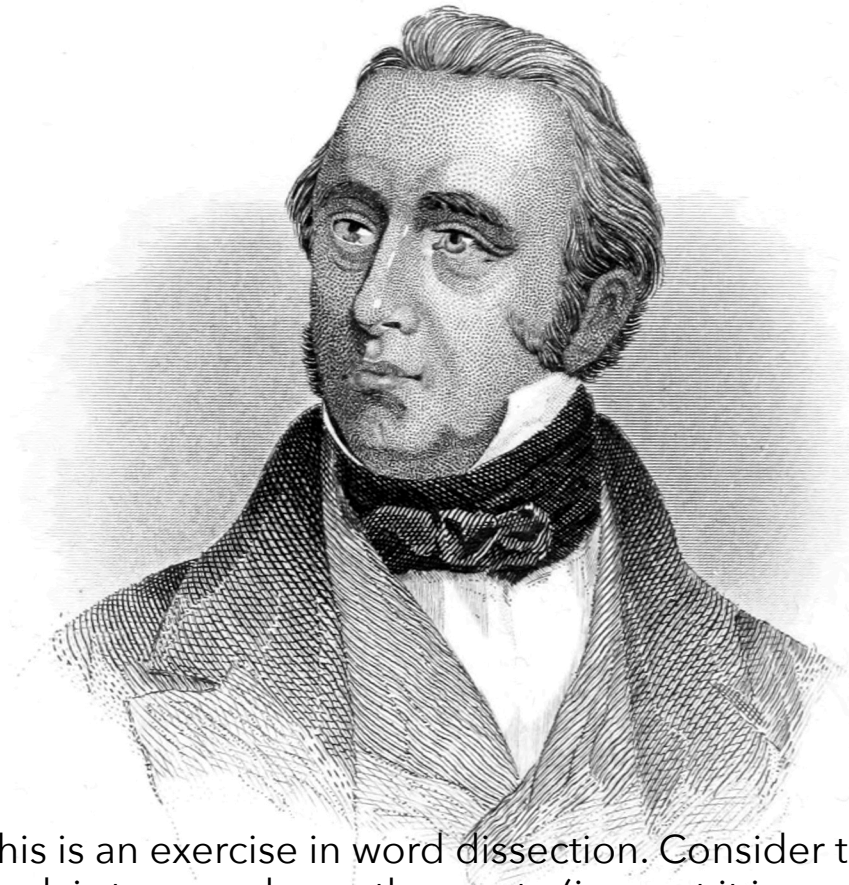
An "edged tool" refers to words being able to cut someone emotionally

"Keener" means sharper, more easily able to cut

"With constant use" means that something is being used often, in this case, nasty words/language.

Lastly, I put all of the pieces back together and voilà, the final product looks like this:

Using harsh, cutting words and language only gets worse with time and constant practice, unlike a knife which grows dull with repeated use.



Part II:

Directions: This is an exercise in word dissection. Consider the quote below. Your task is to paraphrase the quote (i.e., put it in your own words). Use a dictionary and/or thesaurus, as necessary.

"I shall cheerfully bear the reproach of having descended below the dignity of history."

Thomas Babington, Lord Macaulay

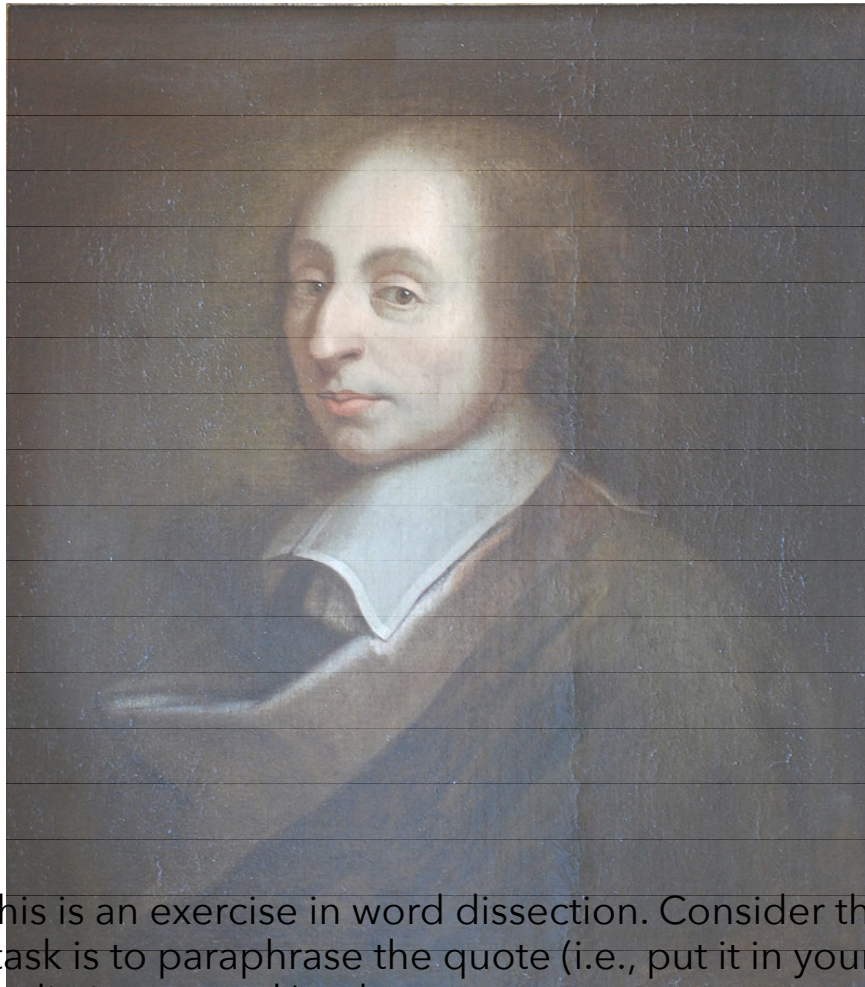
Here's how I paraphrased and/or dissected the above quote:

"cheerfully bear the reproach" means that the speaker is not bothered by a perceived insult

"descending below the dignity of history" means that he is not remembered or written about in the annals of time.

Lastly, I put all of the pieces back together and voilà, the final product looks like this:

It doesn't bother me if I am forgotten in the history books.



Part II:

Directions: This is an exercise in word dissection. Consider the quote below. Your task is to paraphrase the quote (i.e., put it in your own words). Use a dictionary and/or thesaurus, as necessary.

"Men never do evil so completely and cheerfully as when they do it from religious conviction."

Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*

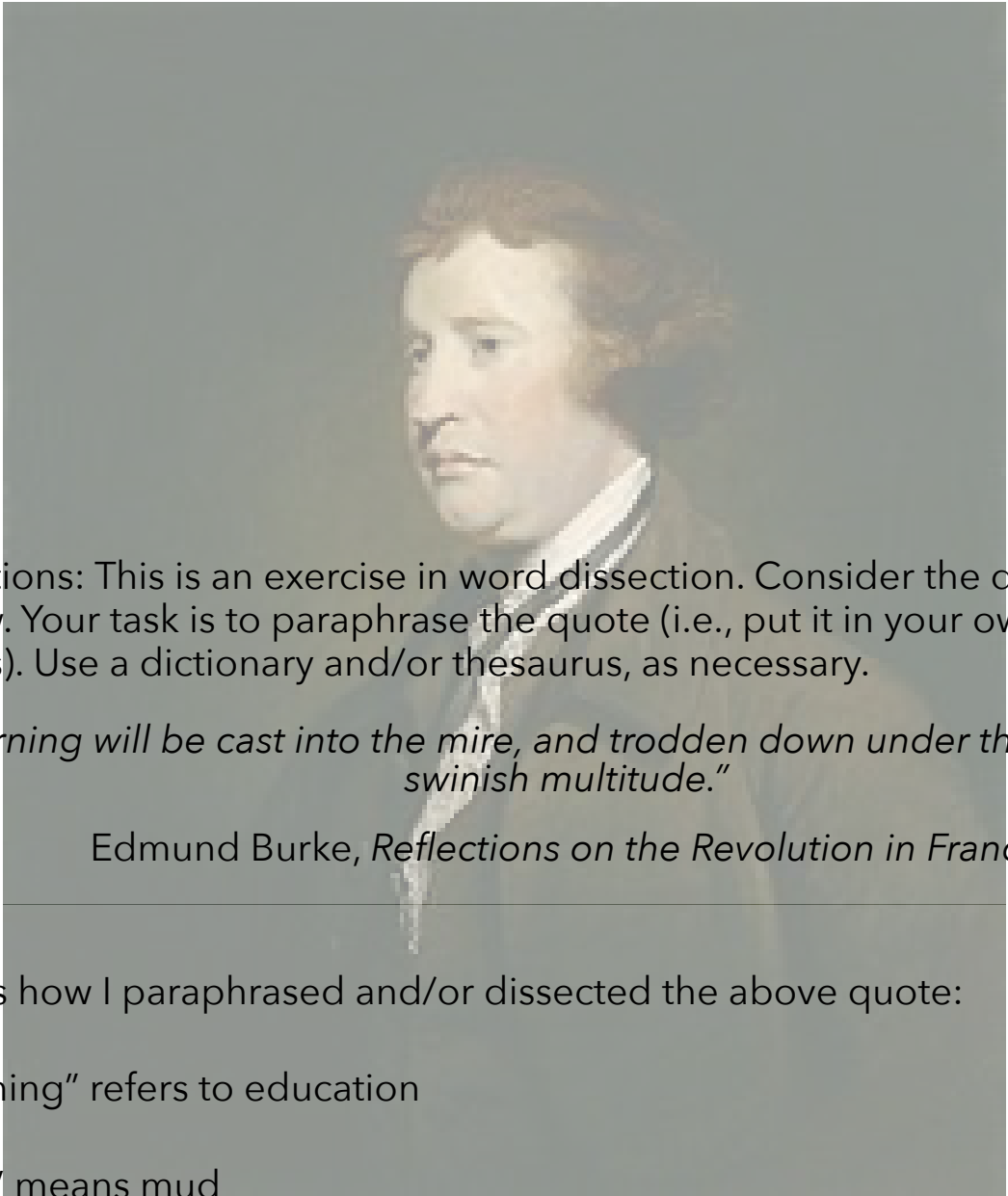
Here's how I paraphrased and/or dissected the above quote:

To "do evil" means to do bad things

"Religious conviction" means religious beliefs

Lastly, I put all of the pieces back together and voilà, the final product looks like this:

The greatest evil done by men is when they do it for religious reasons, or in the name of God.



Part II:

Directions: This is an exercise in word dissection. Consider the quote below. Your task is to paraphrase the quote (i.e., put it in your own words). Use a dictionary and/or thesaurus, as necessary.

"Learning will be cast into the mire, and trodden down under the hoofs of a swinish multitude."

Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*

Here's how I paraphrased and/or dissected the above quote:

"Learning" refers to education

"Mire" means mud

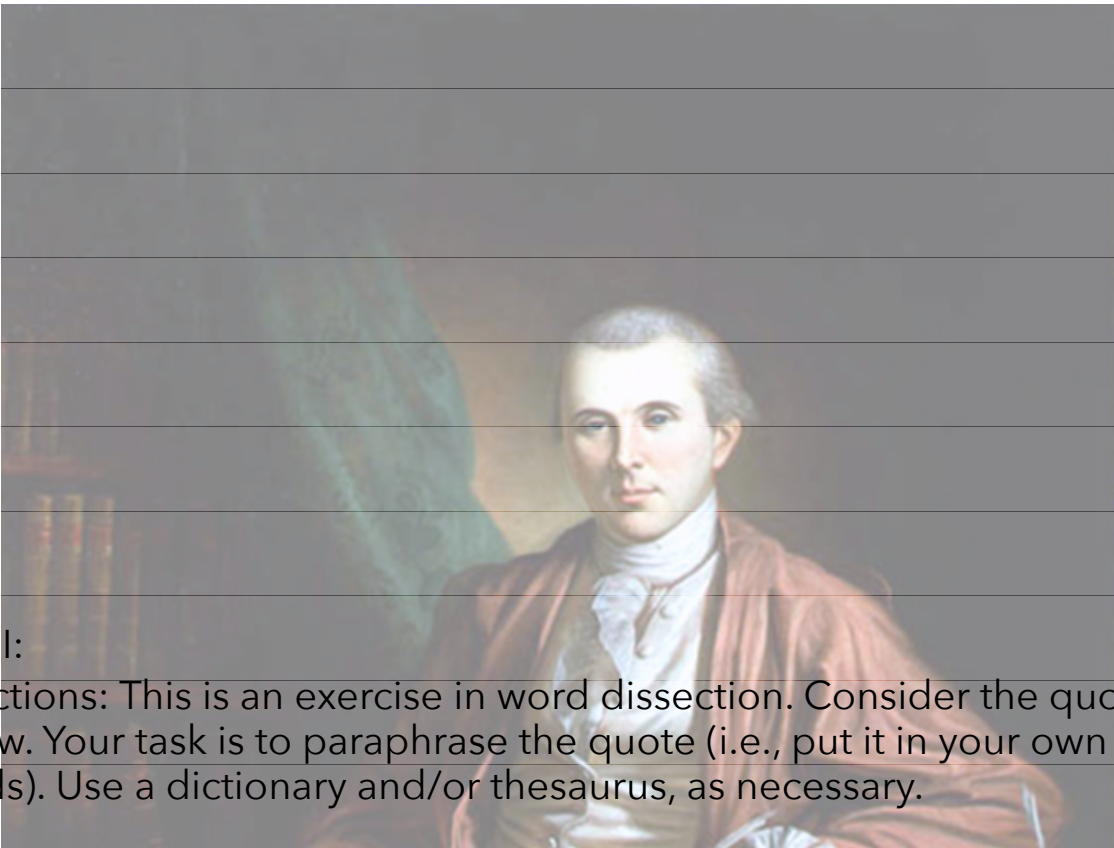
To be "trodden down under" means to be stomped upon

"Swinish" and "hoofs" refers to pigs

"Multitude" means masses of people

Lastly, I put all of the pieces back together and voilà, the final product looks like this:

Education will be thrown down into the mud and stomped on by mobs of people that act like pigs.



Part II:

Directions: This is an exercise in word dissection. Consider the quote below. Your task is to paraphrase the quote (i.e., put it in your own words). Use a dictionary and/or thesaurus, as necessary.

"Freedom can exist only in the society of knowledge. Without learning, men are incapable of knowing their rights, and where learning is confined to a few people, liberty can be neither equal nor universal."

Benjamin Rush, 1786

Here's how I paraphrased and/or dissected the above quote:

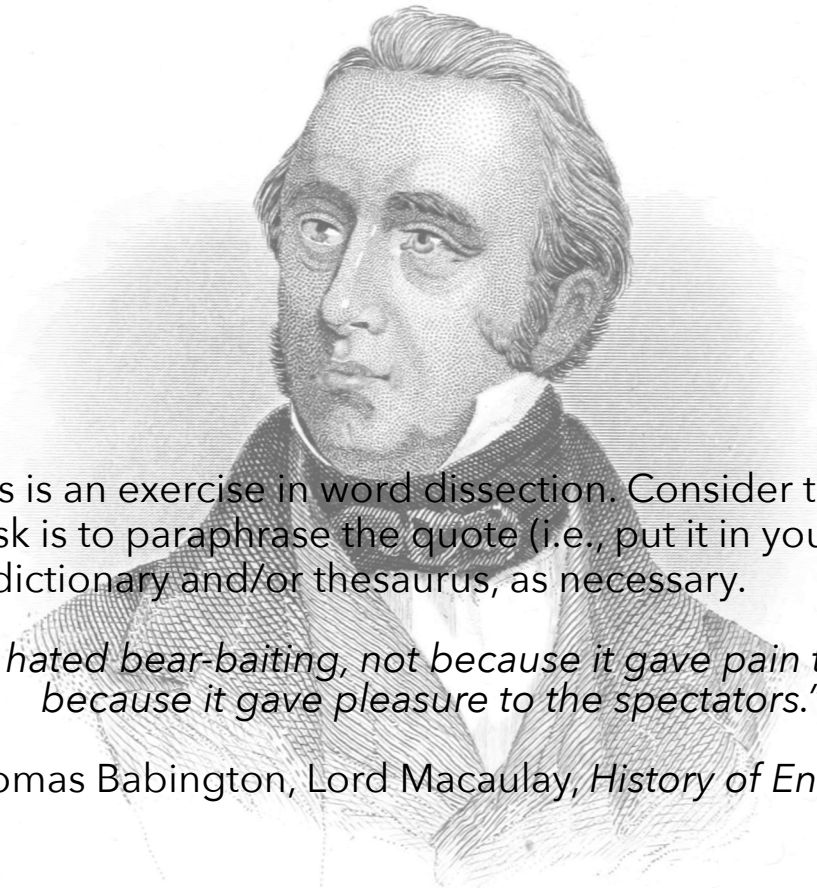
"Learning" means education

If someone is "incapable" it means that they lack the ability to do something

To be "confined" means to be restricted.

Lastly, I put all of the pieces back together and voilà, the final product looks like this:

Freedom can only exist when and where people have an education. Without learning, people won't know, or understand, their rights. If only a few people have an adequate education, then most people will not be free.



Part II:

Directions: This is an exercise in word dissection. Consider the quote below. Your task is to paraphrase the quote (i.e., put it in your own words). Use a dictionary and/or thesaurus, as necessary.

"The Puritan hated bear-baiting, not because it gave pain to the bear, but because it gave pleasure to the spectators."

Thomas Babington, Lord Macaulay, *History of England*

Here's how I paraphrased and/or dissected the above quote:

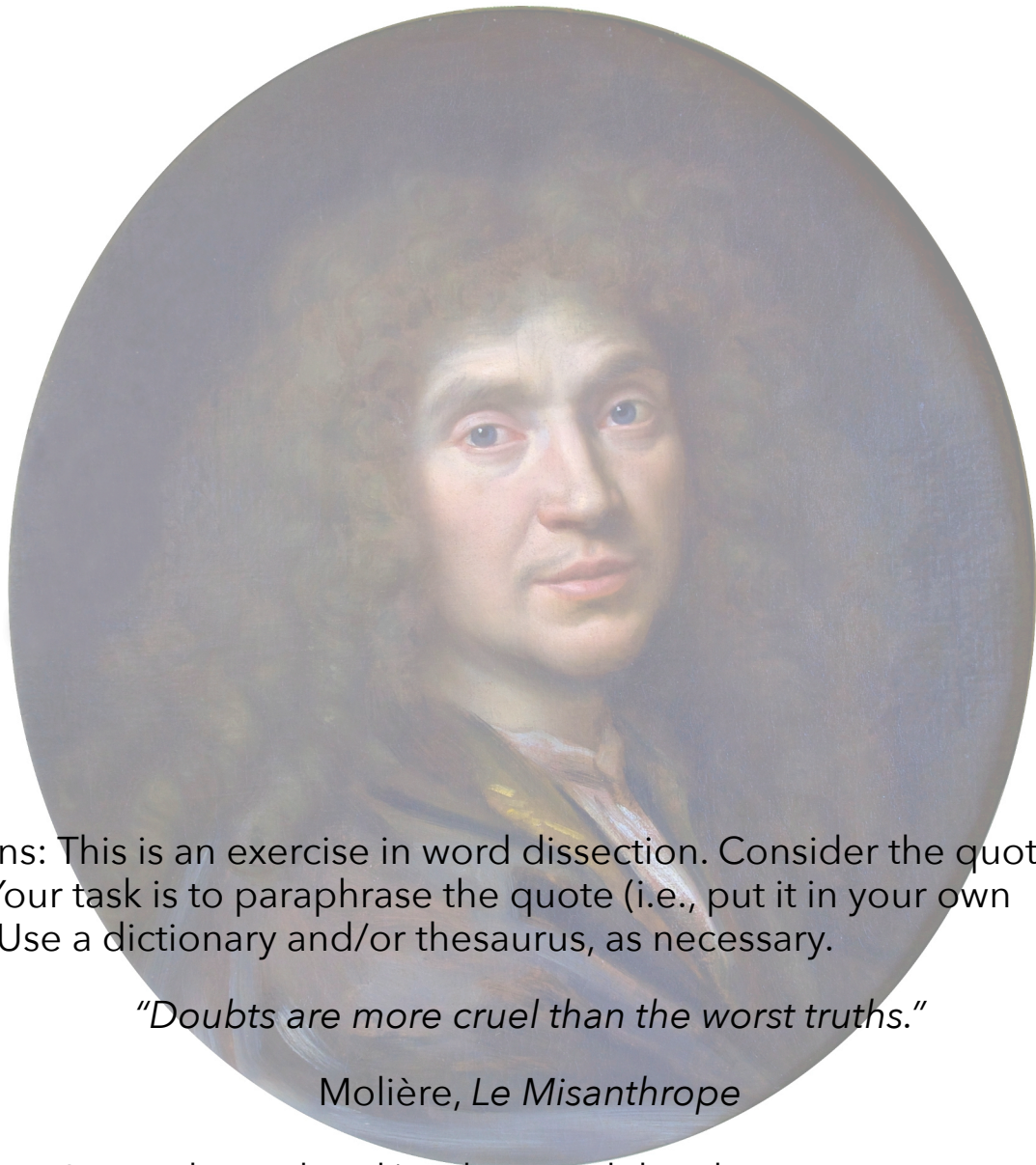
The Puritans were a group of English Protestants that sought to distance themselves from the Catholic Church. They were known for strict religious practices.

To be Puritanical means that you are high-strung or uptight, lacking a sense of humor.

"Bear-baiting" is using dogs, or other animals, to torture and attack bears for sport. A modern day equivalent would be dog fighting. People would place bets on which animal would win the fight.

Lastly, I put all of the pieces back together and voilà, the final product looks like this:

The Puritans hated betting on animal fights because they didn't want people enjoying themselves. At all. Ever.



Part II:

Directions: This is an exercise in word dissection. Consider the quote below. Your task is to paraphrase the quote (i.e., put it in your own words). Use a dictionary and/or thesaurus, as necessary.

"Doubts are more cruel than the worst truths."

Molière, *Le Misanthrope*

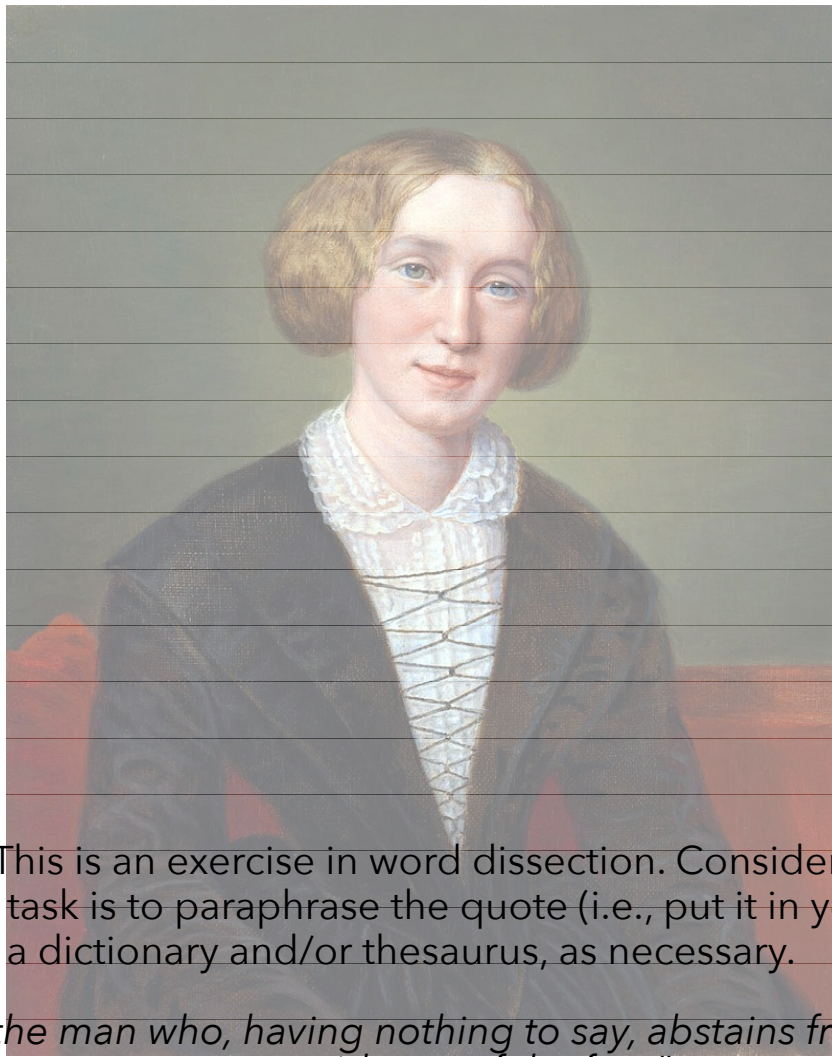
Here's how I paraphrased and/or dissected the above quote:

To have a doubt means to lack conviction or to experience uncertainty.

"Truth" could refer to reality.

Lastly, I put all of the pieces back together and voilà, the final product looks like this:

One's own lack of conviction (or uncertainty) causes more suffering than reality.



Part II:

Directions: This is an exercise in word dissection. Consider the quote below. Your task is to paraphrase the quote (i.e., put it in your own words). Use a dictionary and/or thesaurus, as necessary.

"Blessed is the man who, having nothing to say, abstains from giving in words evidence of the fact."

George Eliot, *Impressions of Theophrastus Such*

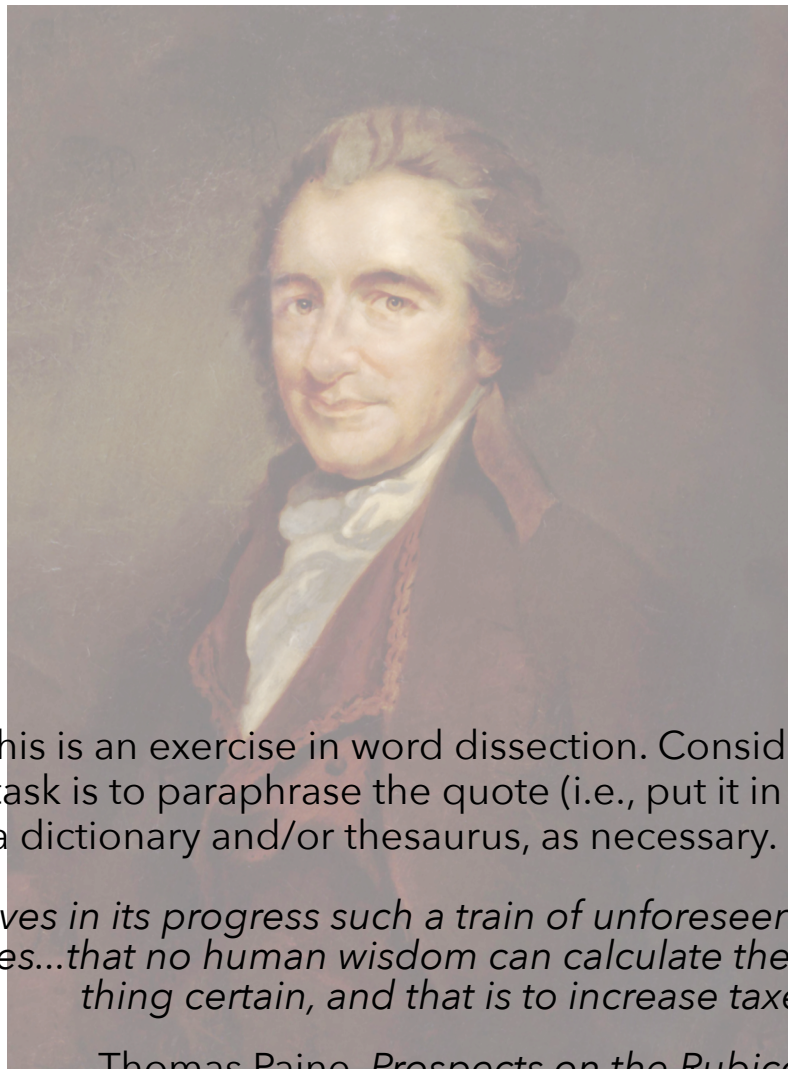
Here's how I paraphrased and/or dissected the above quote:

To be "blessed" means to be revered, held in veneration.

To "abstain" from something means to refrain from doing something.

Lastly, I put all of the pieces back together and voilà, the final product looks like this:

If you don't have anything to say, it is better to be quiet, otherwise you might say something stupid.



Part II:

Directions: This is an exercise in word dissection. Consider the quote below. Your task is to paraphrase the quote (i.e., put it in your own words). Use a dictionary and/or thesaurus, as necessary.

"War involves in its progress such a train of unforeseen and unsuspected circumstances...that no human wisdom can calculate the end. It has but one thing certain, and that is to increase taxes."

Thomas Paine, *Prospects on the Rubicon*

Here's how I paraphrased and/or dissected the above quote:

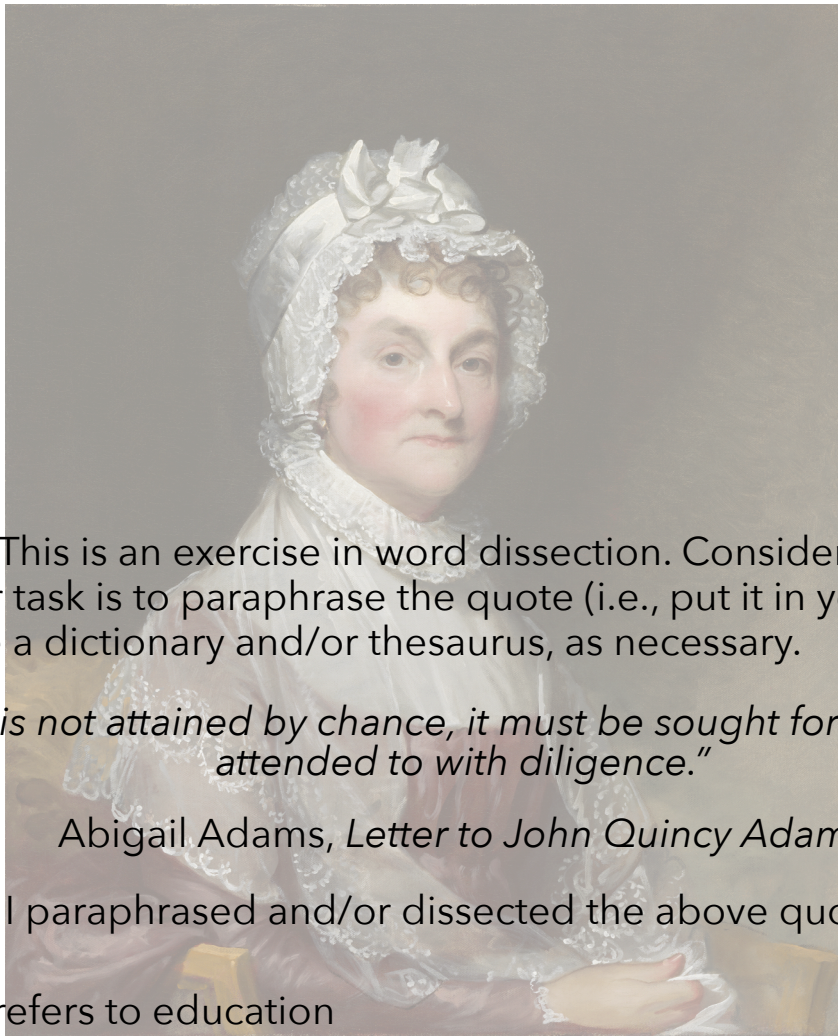
"War" is armed conflict.

A "train of unforeseen and unsuspected circumstances" refers to random events, pure chance.

"Human wisdom can't calculate the end" means that no one can know what's going to happen.

Lastly, I put all of the pieces back together and voilà, the final product looks like this:

War/armed conflict is unpredictable. No one knows how it will turn out. The one thing that you can count on is that someone is going to have to pay for it. This will be done through taxes.



Part II:

Directions: This is an exercise in word dissection. Consider the quote below. Your task is to paraphrase the quote (i.e., put it in your own words). Use a dictionary and/or thesaurus, as necessary.

"Learning is not attained by chance, it must be sought for with ardor and attended to with diligence."

Abigail Adams, *Letter to John Quincy Adams*

Here's how I paraphrased and/or dissected the above quote:

"Learning" refers to education

To "attain" something means to gain something

"By chance" means by accident

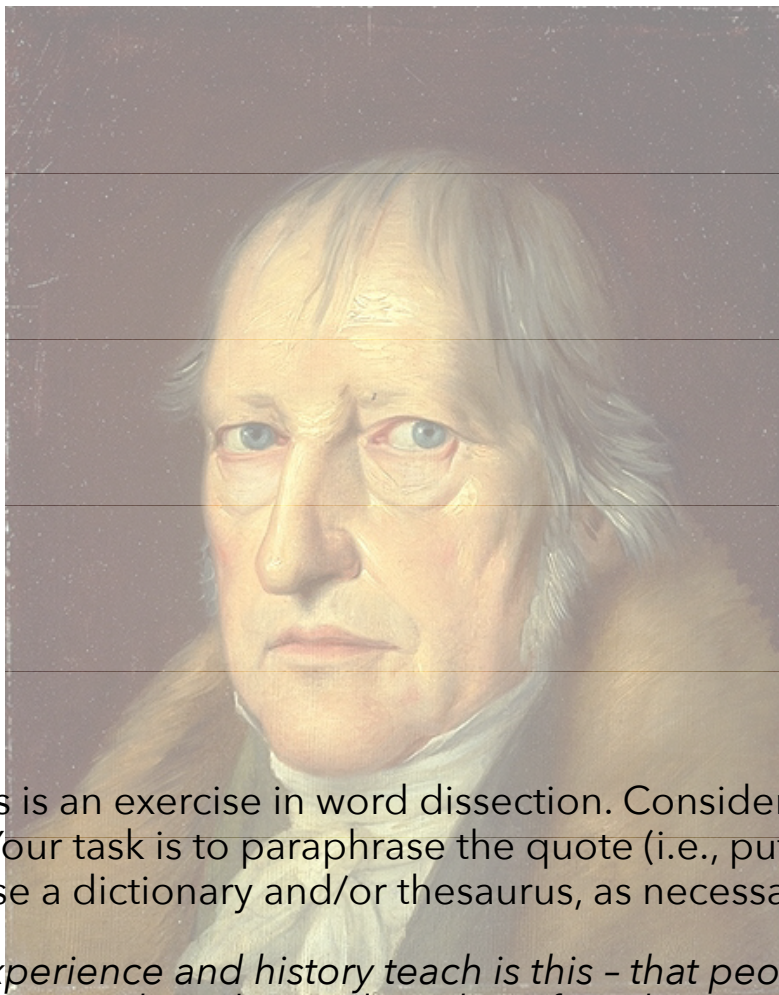
To be sought for means to be looked for

"Ardor" is passion

To "attend to with diligence" means that you are going to have to work hard at something

Lastly, I put all of the pieces back together and voilà, the final product looks like this:

Education is not an accident. It takes passion and hard work.



Part II:

Directions: This is an exercise in word dissection. Consider the quote below. Your task is to paraphrase the quote (i.e., put it in your own words). Use a dictionary and/or thesaurus, as necessary.

"What experience and history teach is this - that people and governments never have learned anything from history, or acted on principles deduced from it."

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel

Here's how I paraphrased and/or dissected the above quote:

A "principle" is a fundamental truth

To "deduce" something means to draw a logical conclusion

Lastly, I put all of the pieces back together and voilà, the final product looks like this:

Time and time again, we see that people don't ever really learn anything from history. Even when it's possible to learn from the mistakes of others, people fail to understand these mistakes and act accordingly.

Who Said it Better? Day 1

Directions: This is an exercise in making judgments about writing. Consider the quotes below. All three quotes deal with the idea of love. Your task is to read each quote and decide which is the best. Explain your reasoning. In order to make your decision, make sure that you understand what each writer is trying to convey.

*"The wounds invisible,
That love's keen arrows make."*
William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*

"Who can give law to lovers? Love is a greater law to itself."
Boethius, *Philosophiae*

"To be loved, be lovable."
Ovid, *Ars Amatoria*

Who said it better – Shakespeare, Boethius, or Ovid?

Here is the winning quote:

*"The wounds invisible,
That love's keen arrows make."*

Shakespeare is triumphant.

I chose this quote because the Bard referenced Cupid from ancient Greek and Roman mythology. That is smart. You have to understand both the mythology of Cupid shooting people with arrows, and that sometimes love hurts. It's smart because it shows the reality - sometimes painful - of love. And his words show humanity. There is depth to this quote, and that's why I chose it as the winner.

Lesson Learned: Show me the reality/humanity of this world and I will appreciate and enjoy your writing.

Question: Why did I start off with quotes about love? Remember that there are no accidents in teaching, writing, or crime. I chose love because love is what makes the world go 'round. And if love makes the world go 'round, then don't you think that your writing should include elements of love?

Who Said it Better? Day 2

Directions: This is an exercise in making judgments about writing. Consider the quotes below. All three quotes deal with the idea of war. Your task is to read each quote and decide which is the best. Explain your reasoning. In order to make your decision, make sure that you understand what each writer is trying to convey.

"The legitimate object of war is a more perfect peace."

William Tecumseh Sherman

"It is well that war is so terrible, or we should grow too fond of it."

Robert E. Lee

"They were going to look at war, the red animal – war, the blood-swollen god."

Stephen Crane, *The Red Badge of Courage*

Who said it better – Sherman, Lee, or Crane?

Here is the winning quote:

"They were going to look at war, the red animal – war, the blood-swollen god."

Crane is crowned the winner.

I chose this quote because of the descriptive language and the imagery. Crane refers to war as an animal – something bestial and raw in nature. Then he refers to war as a god (perhaps a reference, albeit indirectly, to the Greek and Roman god of war –Ares/Mars?) That is smart. And then we have the imagery of a blood-swollen god. Like some tick feeding off of suffering and bloodshed. That's good writing. Very good writing. And that is why Stephen Crane is the winner. If you want to read something else that is extraordinary, then read the opening passage to the novel *The Red Badge of Courage*. Again, Crane's command of the language and his ability to paint a picture with words is worthy of our study and appreciation.

Question: Why is this second quote about war? War is conflict and you need to have a clearly defined conflict in all of your stories. No matter what.

Who Said it Better? Day 3

Directions: This is an exercise in making judgments about writing. Consider the quotes below. Both quotes deal with the idea of being civilized. Your task is to read each quote and decide which is better. Explain your reasoning. In order to make your decision, make sure that you understand what each writer is trying to convey.

"Civilization is the lamb's skin in which barbarism masquerades."

T.B. (Thomas Bailey) Aldrich, from *Ponkapog Papers*

"The civilized man is a more experienced and wiser savage."

Henry David Thoreau, from *Walden*

Who said it better - Aldrich or Thoreau?

Here is the winning quote:

"Civilization is the lamb's skin in which barbarism masquerades."

Aldrich is the winner.

I chose this quote because I'm a fan of lambs.

Actually it's more than my fondness for all things ovine. In truth, both are good quotes - excellent quotes - and both express similar sentiments, but referring to civilization as lamb's skin implies that civilization is something soft and innocent. But underneath this seeming innocence is barbarism. Cruelty that lies just below the surface. Or just behind a mask. A soft mask that hides something awful. Again, both quotes express the same idea, but the innocence of lamb's skin stands in such striking contrast to man's inhumanity, that I must choose the former quote rather than the latter.

Such good writing. I hope that you are starting to see what makes one writer better than another – and how language shapes our thoughts.

Who Said it Better? Day 4

Directions: This is an exercise in making judgments about writing. Consider the quotes below. Both quotes deal with the idea of truth. Your task is to read each quote and decide which is better. Explain your reasoning. In order to make your decision, make sure that you understand what each writer is trying to convey.

"For truth itself does not have the privilege to be employed at any time and in every way; its use, noble as it is, has its circumscriptions and limits."

Michel Eyquem de Montaigne, from his *Essays*

"Humanly speaking, let us define truth, while waiting for a better definition, as—'a statement of the facts as they are'."

Voltaire, from his *Dictionnaire Philosophique*

Who said it better - de Montaigne or Voltaire?

Here is the winning quote:

"For truth itself does not have the privilege to be employed at any time and in every way; its use, noble as it is, has its circumscriptions and limits."

Montaigne is the winner in this contest. He recognizes that truth in and of itself is a good thing, but he also suggest that it has its limits - its constraints. This is an unspoken understanding of humanity. One shouldn't always tell the truth because sometimes the unvarnished truth may cut someone to the quick. Voltaire, on the other hand, provides a clear definition of what truth is, but his words don't bring forth the reality of the human condition. When you are considering what makes good writing, then know that when the words reflect an understanding of humanity, then you have good writing. If a writer knows people, the chances are good that he or she will be a good writer.

Who Said it Better? Day 5

Directions: This is an exercise in making judgments about writing. Consider the quotes below. Both quotes deal with the idea of reading/education/learning. Your task is to read each quote and decide which is better. Explain your reasoning. In order to make your decision, make sure that you understand what each writer is trying to convey.

"A man ought to read just as inclination leads him; for what he reads as a task will do him little good."

from James Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson*

"Bodily exercise, when compulsory, does no harm to the body; but knowledge which is acquired under compulsion obtains no hold on the mind."

Plato, *Republic*

Who said it better - Boswell/Johnson or Plato?

Here is the winning quote:

"Bodily exercise, when compulsory, does no harm to the body; but knowledge which is acquired under compulsion obtains no hold on the mind."

Plato is the winner!

Both of these quotes are excellent. They both speak to the idea of education and learning. I am – as you have probably noted – a huge fan of Samuel Johnson. The man was gifted – extraordinarily so – in matters of writing. In this case, however, I find that I prefer the words of Plato. For only one reason. Johnson refers to just reading, while Plato is refers to a wide range of subjects. You could say that Plato is talking about “school” and “schooling” in general. Much if what is “taught” in schools in not, in fact, retained. This was true thousands of years ago in the time of Plato, and the same holds true today. His words, you could say, are timeless.

Who Said it Better? Day 6

Directions: This is an exercise in making judgments about writing. Consider the quotes below. All three quotes deal with the idea of hope. Your task is to read each quote and decide which is the best. Explain your reasoning. In order to make your decision, make sure that you understand what each writer is trying to convey.

"Hope is itself a species of happiness, and, perhaps, the chief happiness which this world affords: but, like all other pleasures immoderately enjoyed, the excesses of hope must be expiated by pain; and expectations improperly indulged must end in disappointment."

Samuel Johnson, from *James Boswell, The Life of Samuel Johnson*

*"True hope is swift, and flies with swallow's wings:
Kings it makes gods, and meaner creatures kings."*

William Shakespeare, *Richard III*

"Hope, deceitful though it be, is at least of this good use to us – that while we are traveling through this life, it conducts us by an easier and more pleasant way to our journey's end."

François, Duc De La Rochefoucauld, *Moral Maxims and Reflections*

Who said it better - Johnson, Shakespeare, or Rochefoucauld?

Here is the winning quote:

*"True hope is swift, and flies with swallow's wings:
Kings it makes gods, and meaner creatures kings."*

The Bard is back on top!

These three quotes all deal with the idea of hope and all three are excellent. It's difficult to decide which one is the best. Johnson is a little too wordy. In this case, brevity is going to be the deciding factor, thus I am going to go with Shakespeare. I like how the Bard says that hope can impact the greatest among us such as kings, and the lowest – meaner creatures – as well. In other words, hope is universal. I agree that hope is universal and that it can indeed lift up the lowest among us.

Who Said it Better? Day 7

Directions: This is an exercise in making judgments about writing. Consider the quotes below. Both quotes deal with the idea of freedom (of thought). Your task is to read each quote and decide which is better. Explain your reasoning. In order to make your decision, make sure that you understand what each writer is trying to convey.

*"Of all the tyrannies on human kind
The worst is that which persecutes the mind."
John Dryden, *The Hind and the Panther**

*"Liberty of thought is the life of the soul."
Voltaire, *Essay on Epic Poetry**

Who said it better - Dryden or Voltaire?

Here is the winning quote:

"Liberty of thought is the life of the soul."

Voltaire is victorious.

Both quotes deal with thought and its impact upon the spirit. Both quotes express truths, however, Voltaire's words are more hopeful, thus he is the winner. Dryden talks about how thoughts can bind you in mental chains. Voltaire, conversely, speaks to the importance of freedom of thought and how it impacts our spiritual state. In this battle between the quotes, hope and freedom win out. Thoughts of hope and freedom should always win out over darkness.

Who Said it Better? Day 8

Directions: This is an exercise in making judgments about writing. Consider the quotes below. All three quotes deal with the idea of law and wealth. Your task is to read each quote and decide which is the best. Explain your reasoning. In order to make your decision, make sure that you understand what each writer is trying to convey.

"Laws grind the poor, and rich men rule the law."

Oliver Goldsmith

"Anacharsis laughed at him (Solon) for imagining the dishonesty and covetousness of his countrymen could be restrained by written laws, which were like spiders' webs, and would catch, it is true, the weak and poor, but easily be broken by the mighty and rich."

Anacharsis

"Lawsuit, n. a machine which you go in as a pig and come out as a sausage."

Ambrose Bierce

Who said it better - Goldsmith, Anacharsis, or Bierce?

Here is the winning quote:

"Lawsuit, n. a machine which you go in as a pig and come out as a sausage."

Bierce bests them all.

Generally speaking, I appreciate a sense of humor. I will prefer something that is funny over something that is serious. Laughter is our best defense against hopelessness and despair. Bierce has an excellent sense of humor and is the clear winner here. Goldsmith says the word "grind" but Bierce hints at it when he refers to people being ground into sausage. It is a more subtle use of the language, and assumes that the reader knows how sausage is made. In this case, a subtle, lighter touch and humor are the deciding factors in Bierce being the best.

Who Said it Better? Day 9

Directions: This is an exercise in making judgments about writing. Consider the quotes below. All three quotes deal with the idea of honor. Your task is to read each quote and decide which is the best. Explain your reasoning. In order to make your decision, make sure that you understand what each writer is trying to convey.

"The louder he talked of his honor, the faster we counted our spoons."

Ralph Waldo Emerson, from *The Conduct of Life*

"As material fortune is associated with the prosperity of the body, so honor belongs to those of the soul."

Ptolemy, from *Tetrabiblos*

"Never esteem anything as of advantage to you that will make you break your word or lose your self-respect."

Marcus Aurelius

Who said it better - Emerson, Ptolemy or Marcus Aurelius?

Here is the winning quote:

"The louder he talked of his honor, the faster we counted our spoons."

Emerson wins.

As a general rule, humor is going to trump other ways of expressing ideas. Why? Being funny shows intelligence. I like smart. So Emerson is the winner of this challenge. But in order to understand Emerson's use of humor, you have to know certain things. You have to understand that in Emerson's time spoons were valuable. They were made of silver. Today, we don't think of spoons as a valuable commodity, but even one hundred years ago, silverware literally meant silver – a precious metal.

Emerson's words also remind me of a line from Shakespeare's Hamlet, "The lady doth protest too much..."

When someone insists upon something, in this case, the man's honor, Emerson points out that he cannot be trusted. He says it with a knowing wink. And that's why this is such a good quote – and the winner.

Who Said it Better? Day 10

Directions: This is an exercise in making judgments about writing. Consider the quotes below. Your task is to read each quote and decide which is better. In order to make your decision, make sure that you understand what each writer is trying to convey.

In both quotes, the speaker/writer insults another person. Who does it better? Explain your reasoning.

"The atrocious crime of being a young man, which the honorable gentleman (Warpole) has with such spirit and decency charged upon me, I shall neither attempt to palliate nor deny; but content myself with wishing that I may be one of those whose follies may cease with their youth, and not of that number who are ignorant in spite of experience."

William Pitt, Earl of Chatham, *Speech in the House of Commons*, March 6, 1741.

"Sherry (Thomas Sheridan) is dull, naturally dull; but it must have taken him a great deal of pains to become what we now see him. Such an excess of stupidity, sir, is not in Nature."

Samuel Johnson, from Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson*

Who said it better - Pitt or Johnson?

Here is the winning quote:

"The atrocious crime of being a young man, which the honorable gentleman (Warpole) has with such spirit and decency charged upon me, I shall neither attempt to palliate nor deny; but content myself with wishing that I may be one of those whose follies may cease with their youth, and not of that number who are ignorant in spite of experience."

Pitt is without peer here.

The Earl of Chatham's quote is amazing. The man's command of the language is an absolute delight to behold. Both Johnson and Pitt call someone stupid. An insult. It's easy to call someone an idiot, and Johnson's words are funny, there is no doubt. However, Pitt's dry wit is such a perfect example of sarcasm. His contempt for his colleague is both palpable and beautifully expressed. This is perhaps one of my favorite quotes of all time.

Who Said it Better? Day 11

Directions: This is an exercise in making judgments about writing. Consider the quotes below. Both quotes deal with the idea of faith. Your task is to read each quote and decide which is better. Explain your reasoning. In order to make your decision, make sure that you understand what each writer is trying to convey.

"The only faith that wears well and holds its color in all weathers, is that which is woven of conviction and set with the sharp mordant of experience."

James Russell Lowell

"Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

New Testament, Hebrews

Who said it better - Lowell or the New Testament?

Here is the winning quote:

"The only faith that wears well and holds its color in all weathers, is that which is woven of conviction and set with the sharp mordant of experience."

Lowell takes the victory lap.

The quote from the New Testament contains simple and powerful wisdom. Lowell's quote, however, makes better use of the language to express an idea because of his use of metaphor. He compares faith to a garment that can be worn. Lowell also very astutely points out that faith can be tested by good times and bad times. These good and bad times are expressed using the metaphor of weather. Finally, Lowell points out that faith that has been shaped, and tested, by real world experience is the best faith. This is a reflection of Lowell's understanding of humanity. Remember, understanding and expressing the ideas of humor and humanity make for the very best writing.

Who Said it Better? Day 12

Directions: This is an exercise in making judgments about writing. Consider the quotes below. All three quotes deal with the idea of democracy. Your task is to read each quote and decide which is the best. Explain your reasoning. In order to make your decision, make sure that you understand what each writer is trying to convey.

"Democracy will prevail when men believe the vote of Judas as good as that of Jesus Christ."

Thomas Carlyle

"Many forms of Government have been tried, and will be tried in this world of sin and woe. No one pretends that democracy is perfect or all-wise. Indeed, it has been said that democracy is the worst form of Government except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time."

Winston Churchill

"Democracy, which is a charming form of government, full of variety and disorder, and dispensing a sort of equality to equals and unequals alike."

Plato

Who said it better - Carlyle, Churchill, or Plato?

Here is the winning quote:

"Many forms of Government have been tried, and will be tried in this world of sin and woe. No one pretends that democracy is perfect or all-wise. Indeed, it has been said that democracy is the worst form of Government except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time."

Churchill is the champion.

I will admit that I am partial to Churchill due to his actions during the Second World War. They were heroic. Here, amongst the three quotes, I again find myself finding in favor of the British Bulldog. Both Carlyle and Plato offer a critique of the idea of democracy, however slight. Churchill, however, acknowledges that it is an imperfect form of government, yet still insists that it is better than others. He knew all too well the dangers of communism and was prescient in his warning to the West about the dangers of the spread of Soviet control throughout Eastern Europe. For all of its faults, democracy offers the most people the most opportunity to enjoy freedom.

Carlyle does make a Biblical reference, which I like, but Churchill acknowledges the world for what it is – imperfect – but there is a sense of hope, nonetheless, in his words. And hope triumphs in writing and in the real world.

Who Said it Better? Day 13

Directions: This is an exercise in making judgments about writing. Consider the quotes below. Both quotes deal with the idea of dishonesty. Your task is to read each quote and decide which is better. Explain your reasoning. In order to make your decision, make sure that you understand what each writer is trying to convey.

"Men use thought only to justify their wrongdoings, and speech only to conceal their thoughts."

Voltaire, *Dialogue 14. Le Chapon et la Poularde*

*"And thus I clothe my naked villany
With odd old ends stol'n forth of holy writ,
And seem a saint when most I play the devil."*

William Shakespeare, *King Richard III*

Who said it better - Voltaire or Shakespeare?

Here is the winning quote:

*"And thus I clothe my naked villany
With odd old ends stol'n forth of holy writ,
And seem a saint when most I play the devil."*

Shakespeare wins this contest hands down and no questions asked.

You must understand that King Richard III was a bad guy. He was a villain. Voltaire is fairly straightforward in his description of how men use speech and thought to justify ill deeds to themselves and others. It is Shakespeare's clever use of figurative language that sets this quote above and apart from its peer. Clothing his "naked villany" is an excellent example of personification. Also, holy writ is an interesting substitute for the Bible. Lastly, comparing his actions to those of an actor is both an honest admission of his ill deeds and a clever way of saying so. William Shakespeare wins.

Who Said it Better? Day 14

Directions: This is an exercise in making judgments about writing. Consider the quotes below. All three quotes deal with the ideas of freedom and economics. Your task is to read each quote and decide which is the best. Explain your reasoning. In order to make your decision, make sure that you understand what each writer is trying to convey.

"Freedom in economic arrangements is itself a component of freedom broadly understood, so economic freedom is an end in itself...Economic freedom is also an indispensable means toward the achievement of political freedom."

Milton Friedman

"The system of private property is the most important guaranty of freedom, not only for those who own property, but scarcely less for those who do not."

Friedrich August von Hayek

"Everybody thinks of economics whether he is aware of it or not. In joining a political party and in casting his ballot, the citizen implicitly takes a stand upon essential economic theories."

Ludwig von Mises

Who said it better - Friedman, Hayek, or Mises?

Here is the winning quote:

"Everybody thinks of economics whether he is aware of it or not. In joining a political party and in casting his ballot, the citizen implicitly takes a stand upon essential economic theories."

Mises wins.

All three men offer excellent perspectives on the importance of economic freedom. Friedman expressly notes that political and economic freedom are inextricably linked. Hayek explains the importance of private property and its relation to freedom. Mises, however, wisely notes that everyone participates in economics through voting. He makes politics and economics a universal – even if people don't know it. This shows that he understands human nature, and any expression of humanity is going to be an example of good writing.

Who Said it Better? Day 15

Directions: This is an exercise in making judgments about writing. Consider the quotes below. Both quotes deal with the idea of faith and morality. Your task is to read each quote and decide which is better. Explain your reasoning. In order to make your decision, make sure that you understand what each writer is trying to convey.

"Of moral purpose I see no trace in Nature. That is an article of exclusively human manufacture – and very much to our credit."

Thomas Henry Huxley, *Aphorisms and Reflections*

"Faith: You can do very little with it, but you can do nothing without it."

Samuel Butler

Who said it better - Huxley or Butler?

Here is the winning quote:

"Faith: You can do very little with it, but you can do nothing without it."

Butler fits the bill.

Huxley accurately points out that there is little in Nature that would suggest that there is a set of moral precepts that Man is to follow. Any rules of ethical behavior are an invention of our own making. Nature – "red in tooth and claw" – lacks a moral and ethical compass. The fact that we have invented such a compass speaks well for humanity.

Having said that, I think Butler's quote is the better of the two. Why? His words are more succinct, contain a trace of humor, and ring true. His words reflect an understanding of human nature and the challenges that we face in life and how to best face these challenges. Through, and with, faith. As a writer, you need to have faith in your own ability to get words on the page and have faith that your words will resonate. It is easy to wither under criticism. Have faith and keep writing. Also, having faith gives us hope – hope that things will turn out all right. Much like a "happily ever after" for our own lives.

Who Said it Better? Day 16

Directions: This is an exercise in making judgments about writing. Consider the quotes below. All three quotes deal with the idea of politics and politicians. Your task is to read each quote and decide which is the best. Explain your reasoning. In order to make your decision, make sure that you understand what each writer is trying to convey.

"An honest politician is one who when he's bought stays bought."

Simon Cameron

"Politicians (are) a set of men who have interests aside from the interests of the people, and who, to say the most of them, are, taken as a mass, at least one long step removed from honest men. I say this with greater freedom because, being a politician myself, none can regard it as personal."

Abraham Lincoln

"It could probably be shown by facts and figures that there is no distinctly native American criminal class except Congress."

Mark Twain

Who said it better - Cameron, Lincoln, or Twain?

Here is the winning quote:

"An honest politician is one who when he's bought stays bought."

Cameron is the clear winner.

All three quotes reflect a deep understanding of the political class. Lincoln uses self-deprecating humor to poke fun at politicians. Twain uses his own unique brand of wry wit to point out the follies of our elected officials. But only Cameron makes absolutely clear the nature of politics and politicians. Honesty has little to do with politics while money has a great deal to do with it. This shows an understanding of humanity. And he does this in a single sentence. As Shakespeare once wrote, "Brevity is the soul of wit."

Cameron, even though a contemporary of Lincoln, uttered these words over a century ago, and yet they still ring true today.

Brevity and timelessness win the prize.

Who Said it Better? Day 17

Directions: This is an exercise in making judgments about writing. Consider the quotes below. Both quotes deal with the idea of evil. Your task is to read each quote and decide which is better. Explain your reasoning. In order to make your decision, make sure that you understand what each writer is trying to convey.

"No one becomes depraved in a moment."

Decimus Junius Juvenalis, *Satires*

*"Lady Macbeth: I am in blood
Stepp'd in so far, that, should I wade no more,
Returning were as tedious as go o'er."*
William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*

Who said it better - Juvenalis or Shakespeare?

Here is the winning quote:

*"Lady Macbeth: I am in blood
Stepp'd in so far, that, should I wade no more,
Returning were as tedious as go o'er."*

Shakespeare by a nose!

Just because Shakespeare wrote something, doesn't automatically mean that his words will win. There are parts to many of his plays that are tedious. In this case, however, Shakespeare is the winner. For several reasons.

Both questions deal with evil and ill deeds, but the Bard adds layers of depth with his descriptive language.

The quote from Juvenalis is pithy, and I appreciate his understanding of the nature of ill deeds. The descent into doing evil is usually gradual process. No one starts out committing heinous deeds. Usually, criminals start small and work their way up, or rather down, to terrible crimes.

With Shakespeare, we have the image of Lady Macbeth caught in a river/channel/creek/lake of blood. This alone provides the reader with an image of ill deeds so terrible that blood flows in such quantities as to form a body of water. She continues by saying that turning back from her present course, into more bloodshed, is just as difficult as moving forward. Lady Macbeth is caught. She also seems to be suggesting that since she's gone this far there is no reason not to continue - a powerful indictment against her character. These are powerful words. Shakespeare not only provides the reader with a bloody image, but he also has a keen understanding of human nature. Many people, when confronted with the consequences of their actions, do indeed shrug their shoulders and say, "What the hell. I've come this far. Why not finish the bloody business?"

Also, you should avoid the trap of thinking that more words means better words. Just because Shakespeare's quote is longer, doesn't necessarily make it better. Sometimes, using fewer words is better.

Who Said it Better? Day 18

Directions: This is an exercise in making judgments about writing. Consider the quotes below. Both quotes deal with the idea of law(s) and human nature. Your task is to read each quote and decide which is better. Explain your reasoning. In order to make your decision, make sure that you understand what each writer is trying to convey.

"Whoever desires to found a state and give it laws, must start with assuming that all men are bad and ever ready to display their vicious nature, whenever they may find occasion for it."

Niccolo Machiavelli, *Discourse Upon the First Ten Books of Livy*

"No laws, however stringent, can make the idle industrious, the thriftless provident, or the drunken sober."

Samuel Smiles

Who said it better - Machiavelli or Smiles?

Here is the winning quote:

"No laws, however stringent, can make the idle industrious, the thriftless provident, or the drunken sober."

Smiles is the winner.

While I appreciate Machiavelli's understanding of human nature, I think Smiles is more effective. The first quote is just a touch too dark when compared to phrases such as "idle industrious" and "drunken sober". Smiles palliates the darkness of human nature with his word choices.

The lesson here is that sometimes a lighter touch is better. The reader, in this case, me, does not need to be hit over the head with the hammer of "vicious nature" when softer words will suffice.

Who Said it Better? Day 19

Directions: This is an exercise in making judgments about writing. Consider the quotes below. Your task is to read each quote and decide which is better. In order to make your decision, make sure that you understand what each writer is trying to convey.

In both quotes, the authors offer a critique of another's writing. Who does it better? Explain your reasoning.

"His imagination resembled the wings of an ostrich. It enabled him to run, though not to soar."

Thomas Babington

"He delighted to tread upon the brink of meaning."

Samuel Johnson, *The Lives of Poets*

Who said it better - Babington or Johnson?

Here is the winning quote (by a nose):

"His imagination resembled the wings of an ostrich. It enabled him to run, though not to soar."

This is an extremely difficult choice, and I am tempted to say that it is a tie. The reader is left to choose between two images. One image is that of an ostrich – running furiously but never able to fly. The other is of a writer standing on the edge of a precipice, and happy for it.

Johnson gets points for his brevity and the use of the word "delighted". That single word adds just a touch of ridiculousness.

But if the measure for success herein is ridiculousness, then it doesn't get more silly than the image of an ostrich. In this case, it is the picture in my head, conjured by the author's words, that causes me to render judgment in favor of the first quote.

Lesson learned: a picture is indeed worth a thousand words. Imagery is an effective tool for communicating an idea.

Who Said it Better? Day 20

Directions: This is an exercise in making judgments about writing. Consider the quotes below. Both quotes deal with the idea of freedom. Your task is to read each quote and decide which is better. Explain your reasoning. In order to make your decision, make sure that you understand what each writer is trying to convey.

"Necessity is the plea for every infringement of human freedom. It is the argument of tyrants; it is the creed of slaves."

William Pitt, speech in the House of Commons, 1783

"The best government is that where there are the fewest useless men."

Voltaire

Who said it better - Pitt or Voltaire?

Here is the winning quote:

"Necessity is the plea for every infringement of human freedom. It is the argument of tyrants; it is the creed of slaves."

Pitt wins again.

While the two quotes don't seem to explicitly be talking about the same thing, one can infer that Pitt is talking about government. Voltaire is biting in his criticism, but the real power comes with Pitt's words when he writes, "the creed of slaves". The idea of slavery evokes a powerful emotional response - more powerful than "useless men". His use of the word "slaves" is indeed an example of *le mot juste*, or as Twain says, "the lightning versus the lightning bug".

**Thank you for partaking of these
20 Days of Writing Exercises**

The purpose of these writing exercises is to help you learn to get words on the page and understand what makes for good writing.

If you have read the quotes, then you have been exposed to the very best writers that our world has to offer.

Writers such as Voltaire, Johnson, Shakespeare, and more, have a keen understanding of humanity...and the craft of writing.

Hopefully, you have a better understanding of the craft of writing...and more words on the page.