**Ms. Carrasco
AP Literature**

*End of the Year Reflection Paper*

Throughout the course of this year, I believe I have developed significantly as a writer, reader, and more importantly as a thinker. AP Literature challenged me with difficult language and deep meaning in the stories, poems, etc. that forced me to learn to interpret different types of material from different time periods and authors. I learned how to essentially think outside of the box and understand meaning hidden beyond the text. When I began this year, I was told that I would have to put together a senior portfolio of essays and projects that I completed throughout the year to demonstrate my own weaknesses and strengths in my writing as the year progressed. Some of my works I have been proud of and believed that I nailed it; other works of mine I haven’t been so successful. In my senior portfolio, I include a wide variety of work to show my progress and growth as a writer, reader, and thinker over the course of the year.

My college essay was one of the first essays of the year I completed. I would say that my essay was one of my strongest pieces of work that I completed this year. I wrote about two of the things that mean the most to me; running and finding myself. One of the reasons I feel that I did well on the essay was due to the fact that I was so excited to write it and I’ve discovered that the more passionate I am about a topic, the better I do on it. In the essay I discussed how I had been such an introvert throughout most of my short life and how eventually running and the right couple of people helped change that and allowed me to open up. One of the things that means the most to me is self-acceptance. I thoroughly believe that becoming a runner and meeting some of the greatest people I have ever known made me better myself. Running added to my character and taught me to push through any obstacle; I learned to apply the lessons I learned from the sport to my daily life and saw a significant improvement and increase in my happiness. In the essay, I struggled a bit with adding my own voice to it, but with the help of my English teacher I believe it turned out successful in the long run (no pun intended). The greatest lesson I learned while writing my college essay was to SHOW it, not tell it.

For my research portion of my portfolio, I chose my Frankenstein Inquiry Research Project. In class, we read “Frankenstein” by Mary Shelley about a scientist named Victor who essentially created a monster. Victor went against nature; he created his monster in a laboratory. For the inquiry project, we had to rise questions on topics brought up in the novel. I chose to question the ethics and morals of creating life. The project required us to write annotated bibliographies and small summaries of articles, videos, etc. that relate to our topic. The reason I chose this project as the representation for my research section of my portfolio was because I thought it was not my strongest piece of work. At the time, I believed that I was successful in interpreting and connecting the ideas from other authors, radio broadcasters, etc. whose sources I used. Now looking back on the project I realized I summarized too often and never connected the meaning of each source with the meaning as a whole. One of my biggest weaknesses this year was that I often summarized and neglected to relate back to the greater meaning.

Also having to do with Frankenstein is my three-column notes. For these we were assigned to pick an excerpt from the text and in one column pick out the literary analysis of that portion of the text and express our own responses in the other column. I believed book notes were some of my stronger pieces because of my love for reading. Although it was clear in class I am not a fan of being vocal or expressing my thoughts and opinions out loud with several people, I feel I do well in getting all of those things down on paper. For the three-column notes, I succeeded in acknowledging the imagery, tone, voice, diction, and setting in the excerpts I chose. I believe that when I establish what all of those things are in pieces of text that I can interpret the material more efficiently. However I do believe that my responses could have been more specific; I do have strong opinions and stick to my gut feelings, but looking back I sounded very vague in expressing my thoughts.

Lastly I am adding my symbol paper on Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte to my senior portfolio. I believe that if I had taken more time to fully analyze more specific key points in the text, I would have been much more successful in this essay and score higher than a 4+. I chose one of the biggest symbols in Jane Eyre, fire. I do believe I was successful in analyzing and interpreting all of the meanings behind what I did write about, but looking back I should have included specifics. In addition, I needed to think about what I was trying to prove and organize the principles in my paragraphs. I ultimately needed to pull all of the ideas together to form one major argument which I failed to do.

All in all, this year was quite the challenge, but I believe that I took a lot away from the class. I learned how to become a better thinker with the help of my teacher and classmates in which I picked up others’ ways of interpreting material and made them my own. I believe in the future I will be a better writer now that I can carry all of the lessons I learned with me.