

# **IN-CLASS ESSAYS**

**ENG 1101 / ENG 1121 / IDDINGS**



# **THE DIRECTIONS (1101)**

**You will have your choice of two prompts, both of which relate to the article. The wording of the two prompts will vary slightly, but it will include the following directions:**

- **Write a well-developed essay of about 5 paragraphs**
- **Your essay must have a thesis.**
- **You must quote at least once from the article.**
- **You may refer to other materials you've read or viewed (but you don't have to).**

# GENERAL TIPS

- Read instructions and prompts carefully.
- Plan by jotting down bullet points—a few words or phrases per point. Then, spend a few minutes expanding and organizing those points.
- Don't start over. If you need to add ideas, use arrows or asterisks (\*) to show where additions are made. (You can also skip a few lines after each paragraph so there's room for additions if necessary.)
- Don't make a neat copy. This is a waste of time. Instead, just make the corrections on the original.
- Stop early in order to save time for proofreading at the end. Look for your most common errors (spelling, commonly confused words, run-ons, fragments, verbs).  
*(Rules of Thumb p. 101-103)*

# WRITING

- You will almost always want to use 4- or 5- paragraph essay structure: an introduction, followed by 2-3 body paragraphs, and a conclusion.
- Your essay should have a thesis sentence in the introduction. The thesis does not need to be elaborate, but it should make a claim [I agree/disagree with z; x causes y; a and b are similar/different; etc.].
- The thesis sentence or introduction should preview the organization of the essay [...because 1, 2, 3; by 1, 2, 3; etc., in which 1, 2, and 3 correspond to the body paragraphs]
- Each body paragraph should begin with a topic sentence, followed by an explanation of your terms (if necessary), facts, and examples.

# READING

- **Use your study time wisely! Make sure you are thoroughly familiar with the article. Annotate ahead of time.**
- **Review the first 5 chapters of *They Say / I Say* for tips about reading complex texts.**
  - Remember that the author of the exam article may present other people's ideas; be sure to distinguish between what the article's author claims and what the author is saying *others* say. Make notes in the margin when the author addresses counterclaims.
- **Mark 1 or 2 sentences in which the author's main idea is clearly stated (in complex texts, the main idea doesn't necessarily appear right at the beginning).**
- **Be aware of the difference between big ideas (general claims) and the examples the author uses to support them.**
- **Define unfamiliar words and look up unfamiliar references to people, places, events, etc.**

# **SAMPLE PROMPTS**

Choose A or B and write a well-developed essay of about five paragraphs.

A. In his essay, Seth Mydans writes about texting as an effective agent for language change and the reactions to such change from various parties. Based on your own experience, consider how change has occurred in your life or in the lives of those around you. Describe in detail the agent of change and the effects it had. What lesson did you learn about change from this experience? How does Mydan's view on the impact of texting on language compare to what you have experienced? If you like, instead of referring to a situation in your own experience, you may write about a situation described in something you've read. In the course of writing your essay, you must state clearly the point of Mydan's article, what he is basing it on, why he feels it is important, and how it compares to what you have experienced or read about. You may address this question in any order, but be sure to respond to all parts of this assignment and to connect your thoughts into a single, clearly organized essay.

# **SAMPLE PROMPTS**

Choose A or B and write a well-developed essay of about five paragraphs.

B. In his essay, Seth Mydans writes about texting as an effective agent for language change and the reactions to such change from various parties. Think about another instance when change has divided those around you—at school, at church, at work, in your family. Describe in detail the particular agent of change and its effects. Then write about the two different reactions to it. Explain the reasons for the change and why for some it is seen as positive and for others as negative. If you like, instead of referring to a situation in your own experience, you may write about a situation described in something you've read. In the course of writing your essay, you must state clearly the point of Mydans' article, what he is basing it on, why he feels it is important, and how it compares to what you have experienced or read about. You may address this question in any order, but be sure to respond to all parts of this assignment and to connect your thoughts into a single, clearly organized essay.

# **SAMPLE ARTICLE P. 1**

From: *The New York Times* / April 9, 2007

## **Texting Shorthand Annoys Purists and May Have Lasting Impact** by Seth Mydans

If u cn rEd ths, ur doin gr8. It is the newest variant of English, a compressed jumble of letters and numbers that has emerged in recent years as the language of the text message. Quick, inventive and utilitarian, it is a minimalist form of the language that some call irrelevant and many schoolteachers say is an insult to the English language. But with more than a trillion text messages sent every year, it is impossible to ignore. Texting also, according to linguists, has three characteristics—the rapid rate at which it generates neologisms, or new words, its “communicative efficiency,” or ease of use, and its global pervasiveness --that may make it a particularly effective agent for language change.

Texting has produced its own vocabulary of acronyms, homonyms and abbreviations, things like LOL (laughing out loud) and CUL8R (see you later) that have, in their own context, become new English words. WYGOWM (will you go out with me). MTFBWY (may the force be with you). PU (this stinks). SUP (what's up).

The vocabulary of text messaging realizes an old lexicographical dream - attempted and failed at by luminaries like George Bernard Shaw - the realignment of spelling with sound. No more rough, trough, thought, through - just ruf, trof, thot, thru. New conventions in spelling have emerged, like the use of a capital letter to denote a long vowel: ths is EzE to rEd.



# SAMPLE ARTICLE P. 2

And there is evidence that some spellings are leaking out into broader use. Last November, the Scottish Qualifications Authority, which sets standards for the testing of students, said phrases like 2B R NT 2B and I LUV U would be acceptable in exam papers. Also late last year education officials in New Zealand said they might accept some abbreviations like WOT or WANNA or CUZ on examinations.

There was, of course, a backlash. Newspapers called the Scottish proposal ridiculous. In New Zealand, Judy Turner, a member of Parliament, put her objection in writing: "Skoolz r ther 2 educ8 + raze litracy 2 certn standrds."

But there is no pristine version of English that must be protected from alien incursions, said Denis Pyatt, principal of Papanui High School in Christchurch, New Zealand, who is a linguist. "Text messaging is one of the more exciting developments of language that has occurred for a long time," Pyatt said in a telephone interview. "I think it's another wonderful example of how language grows, and it's another example of how language change cannot be stopped." He added: "Given the global village we are now part of, the immediacy of all communications now and how quick it all is, I can't see how this would not influence the future of the language."

For those who don't want to be left behind, any English word or phrase can be instantly translated into Text Speak at [www.transl8it.com](http://www.transl8it.com). "d qix brown fox jumped Ovr d lazy K9," for example. Even the British Council, one of the arbiters of the international use of English, seems to be giving ground. Its Web site offers a lesson plan for Valentine's Day that lets students "create their own romantic text message in English." This bastion of the Queen's English offered a couple of suggestions: WUBMV, it said - Will you be my Valentine? And xoxoxoxoxo - hugs and kisses.

Seth Mydans is a reporter who covers socio-cultural issues for [The New York Times](#).