**Literature of the Americas: Unit 1**

**“American Voices” Writing Portfolio**

**Ms. Dearinger—Fall 2017**

Over the course of this unit, we will explore what it means to be an American by reading and analyzing voices from multiple perspectives that capture vastly different American experiences. The concept of the “American Dream” will be presented, challenged, and dissected in an attempt to understand how this ideal has played a crucial role in the lives of so many different Americans. Brilliant, emotional, imploring voices will share their perspectives regarding their experiences with the past and present ideal of what it means to be an American and their journey towards the “American Dream.”

After each reading from the American Voices collection, you will be given a writing assignment. The purpose of this portfolio is to give you an opportunity to experiment with different types of writing and to respond to the themes and styles of this unit’s authors in a variety of ways. Some of this writing will be done in class, but most will be done as homework on your own. You should complete each portfolio piece as it is assigned. At the end of the unit, the writing pieces will be arranged in a well- organized, high quality portfolio. You will earn credit based on completeness, adherence to the assignment, and depth and clarity of thought for each piece. One piece will be the STAR of your portfolio and should be your most polished, most accomplished piece, one that truly represents your best writing of the unit. **Please put the word STAR on the top of your chosen piece**. You will also include a cover sheet that introduces your work and explains how these pieces represent your best writing skills, as well as what you learned throughout this unit.

\*\*See the back of this sheet for a complete list of the readings and paired writing assignments for your portfolio.\*\*

**Grading criteria**: Below is a list of criteria I will take into account as I am grading your final Portfolios. **This project is worth 150 points**, so you will want to make sure you understand the expectations clearly.

* **Turned in on time**
  + - The due date for your final portfolio is **WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27.**
* **Adherence to instructions on daily writing assignments**
  + - Be sure to answer the questions and/or follow the prompts that are provided for you for each assignment, and make sure that every assignment is complete.
* **Creativity**
  + - Please be as creative as possible through style, voice, content, etc. for each assignment.
* **Presentation**
  + - Neatness and format are important for this assignment. Pieces in your final portfolio must be typed in MLA format. Include each entry on a separate sheet of paper in your portfolio. Make sure each piece has a heading. Your heading should include the following: title of piece, author and a brief recap of the specific task you were asked to perform. A cover page should also be included. More details will be provided as the due date approaches.
* **Writing conventions**
  + - Proofread your final portfolio before turning it in; points will be taken off for excessive spelling errors, grammar errors, incorrect word choice, etc. Remember this Portfolio should highlight writing skills in all respects.

**American Voices Unit**

***Readings and Assignments***

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| **Title of Reading and Author** | **Portfolio Writing Assignment** |
| 1.“My Name” by Sandra Cisneros (excerpted from *The House on Mango Street*) | Narrative Pastiche |
| 2. “Growing Up Asian in America” by Kesaya Noda | Poetic Non-fiction |
| 3. “I Hated Tonto (Still Do)” by Sherman Alexie | Poetry |
| 4. . “We Are Ugly But We’re Here” by Edwidge Danticat | Reader Response |
| 5. “Let America be America Again” by Langston Hughes | Imagery Study |
| 6. *An American Childhood* by Annie Dillard (excerpted passage) | Creative Writing |