**The Senior Exit Portfolio Essay**

**Purpose:** This essay focuses on your high school experience anduses 3 selected work samples to illustrate your conclusions about your time at NHS.

**Suggested Process:**

**Step 1:** Selecting your work samples

These samples can be from **ANY** course. There are no restrictions on core subjects or electives. If you want 3 art samples, **DO IT**!

Avoid picking samples based only upon a score. Choose ones that **say** something about you, your growth, or your high school experience. Perhaps choose a selection that helped you learn a valuable life lesson.

**Step 2:** There are 2 ways to approach this assignment:

**Option A:** If you have selected your 3 work samples, analyze your choices.

Are these samples of your best work?

Are these samples of work in your area of greatest interest?

Do these reveal your personal and/or academic growth?

Did you do something differently working on these assignments?

After analyzing all 3 selections, what do they demonstrate about your overall high school experience? (This will be your thesis statement!)

**Option B:** If you have not selected your 3 work samples, reverse the process.

1) Decide what you want to say about your high school experience.

2) Think about work you’ve completed that illustrates your desired message.

Are these samples of your best work?

Are these samples of work in your area of greatest interest?

Do these reveal your personal and/or academic growth?

Did you do something differently working on this assignment?

**Step 3:** Clarify your thesis statement; make sure your work samples support your

thesis.

Here are some possible topics/themes to consider:

An interest I never thought I’d develop. . .

Study habits that worked for me. . .

The most important thing I learned in high school. . .

Taking a risk that worked for me. . .

What sets me apart from other high school students. . .

A challenge I overcame. . .

Rewards come in different shapes and sizes. . .

**Step 4:** Draft your essay.

Don’t “freak out” about the perfect introduction/conclusion. You can always return to

these.

Focus on including figurative language and specific anecdotes from your life at NHS to

make your essay come alive.

“Be real!” Don’t just write what you think a teacher/administrator/portfolio reviewer

wants to hear. Tell your truth (within reason).

**Make sure to explain why you chose these work samples.**

**Step 5:** Revise and edit your rough draft, checking for the following:

Spelling/grammar

Sentence beginnings (Use a variety of sentence beginnings.)

Smooth, sophisticated transitions

Inviting introduction/satisfying conclusion

Avoid boring words that don’t say anything: good, bad, thing, stuff, a lot, kind of, etc.

Avoid the use of any form of the word “you”

Avoid the use of slang

Consistent verb tense and person

Avoid the use of symbols

**Step 6:** Complete the final copy

Correct MLA heading

Word processed

Double-spaced

12-point font

2 page minimum