



# CORE ONE: AFRICA AND ASIA





**CORE TWO:  
EUROPE**





# *Simplify Homeschool*

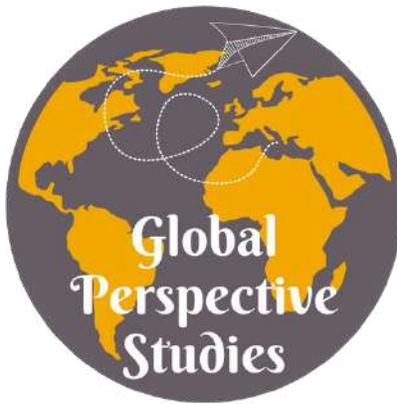
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## *Important Stuff for Parents and Teachers*

### **WHAT DO YOU NEED?**

You will need the following resources in order to complete this program. You can print the program or utilize it on a tablet or computer.

#### **Paper, Pencils, and other obvious school supplies**

There are occasionally places that ask students to be more creative and create collages or draw something. However, the vast majority of assignments involve writing and reading.

#### **A computer with internet access**

Students are asked to do research, look up terms, and access various web-based videos, primarily on YouTube.

#### **A history textbook or other history resource**

There is more about this in the section on history. Students will need a reference book. You can use any reputable world history textbook or encyclopedia. We believe a basic, high school world history textbook is the best option. Because of how textbooks are priced, we strongly recommend buying a used textbook. We suggest the following titles, but you can choose any textbook or reference.

*World History: Connections to Today* by Prentice Hall

*World History: Patterns of Interaction* by Holt McDougal Littel

*World History: The Human Experience* by Glencoe

*World History: From the Dawn of Civilization to the Present Day* by Adam Hart-Davis

*World History: From the Ancient World to the Information Age* by Philip Parker

If you are doing GPS Core 2: Europe, then you may choose to have a European history textbook instead. Note that most European history textbooks are geared toward the AP exam and cover a different set of material than GPS does. A European history text would be more useful for Units 2-4 but less useful in Unit 1, which is all material not covered by the AP exam. However, the history book for the first unit covers a wider range and a student should be fine with this option if you choose it. Some good European history textbooks include the ones listed below.

*The Western Heritage* by Kagan, Ozment, and Turner

*Western Civilization* by Spielvogel

*A History of Western Society* by McKay

**Our Literature Textbook:**

*World Masterpieces* by Prentice Hall Literature

This book is used throughout GPS years 1 and 2. It is a used textbook that is available through used booksellers, including Amazon sellers, Better World Books, and Abebooks. You can use any edition from the 1990's or early 2000's. Note that this book is similar, but not the same, as the book labeled the "Penguin edition." The following ISBN numbers are all valid for this textbook, but they may not be the only ones:

ISBN-13: 978-0134146249

ISBN-10: 9780134146249

ISBN-13: 978-0136916925

ISBN-10: 0136916929

ISBN 10: 0134146247

ISBN 13: 9780134146249

ISBN 10: 0137226381

ISBN 13: 9780137226382

**Additional Books for GPS Core 1:**

**AFRICA**

*Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe

*The Dark Child* by Camara Laye

*Born a Crime* by Trevor Noah

*The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas

*Africa; A Biography of the Continent* by John Reader

*Purple Hibiscus* by Chimamanda Adichie Ngozi

**MIDDLE EAST**

*Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi

*Arab of the Future*, vol 1 by Riad Sattouf

*Lissa* by Sherine Hamdy and Coleman Nye

*Islam: A Short History* by Karen Armstrong

*The Hero and the Crown* by Robin McKinley

**INDIA**

*Haroun and the Sea of Stories* by Salman Rushdie

*The Ramayana: A Shortened Modern Prose Version of the Indian Epic* by N.K Narayan

*Siddhartha* by Hermann Hesse

*The Ocean of Churn* by Sanjeev Sanyal

**EAST ASIA**

*Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress* by Dai Sijie

*Kitchen* by Banana Yoshimoto

*Foundations of Chinese Civilization (Understanding China Through Comics)* by Jing Liu

*Division to Unification in Imperial China (Understanding China Through Comics)* by Jing Liu

*Barbarians and the Birth of Chinese Identity (Understanding China Through Comics)* by Jing Liu

*The Making of Modern China (Understanding China Through Comics)* by Jing Liu

*Modern China: A Very Short Introduction* by Rana Mitter

## **Additional Books for GPS Core 2:**

Unit One: BEGINNINGS

*The Story of Greece and Rome*

*Nimona* by Noelle Stephenson

*The Odyssey* by Homer, translated by Emily Wilson

*Beowulf* translated by Seamus Heaney

Note that any edition of *The Odyssey* is fine. This is just our top pick.

Unit Two: EXPLORATIONS

*Heretics and Heroes* by Thomas Cahill

*Tulipomania* by Mike Dash

*Othello* by William Shakespeare

*Candide* by Voltaire

Unit Three: REVOLUTIONS

*The Ghost Map* by Steven Johnson

*Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens

*Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley

*All Quiet on the Western Front* by Erich Maria Remarque

Unit Four: TRANSFORMATIONS

*One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* by Alexandyr Solzhenitsyn

*Code Name Verity* by Elizabeth Wein

*Maus I and II* by Art Spiegelman

*White Teeth* by Zadie Smith

## **OUR PHILOSOPHY ABOUT CONTROVERSIAL TOPICS**

Students using GPS should be teens in high school. We have striven to choose materials that are appropriate for students. However, we strongly believe that high school students should learn about controversial topics. This means that books we have chosen do not shy away from dealing with war, oppression, and violence. We also believe that teens are ready to read books with some explicit language and mentions of sex or sexuality.

Though sex is sometimes mentioned, none of the books or films we recommend have explicit sex. There are specific warnings about various books placed in the notes to the parent that start each unit. There are also trigger warnings for the student integrated into the “Big Ideas” and “Scheduling Notes” sections that begin each week.

It is up to parents to screen materials that you may feel uncomfortable with. There are alternatives listed in the notes to the teacher that begin each unit.

## **NAVIGATING GPS**

GPS is organized into four units. Each unit has eight weeks. Each week is scheduled for four days. Students should read the introduction that begins each week. It previews the important themes and ideas for the week. The scheduling notes detail if particular assignments will likely take more time or need to be done before others can be completed.

After the introduction page for the week there are assignments. These can be anything, from writing assignments to making a video. Many weeks include primary sources or sometimes short literature excerpts that are not included in the textbook. Finally, there are short answer questions. If students wish, they can answer these right on the page. Most short answer questions in GPS require a paragraph. There are usually between 4-10 literature and history short answer questions for each week. However, sometimes we ask students to write a short reflection, fill out a chart, or do some other assignment to organize and reflect.

Each unit has a different theme at the top of the pages. These are drawn from art from the regions or the period for each unit.

All of GPS is color coded. Check bubbles next to assignments, bars at the top of pages of questions, and lines next to assignments are all color coded. These are ever so slightly different in Core 1 and Core 2.

For Core 1:

Light Blue = Writing

Dark Blue = World Literature

Yellow = Hero Literature

Orange = History

For Core 2:

Dark Blue = World Literature

Yellow = Anything pertaining to art, culture, or our villains theme

Orange = History

Note that there is overlap between these sometimes. The lines are not absolutely firm. If you are separating out history or literature, you may want to glance at the other colors and occasionally assign the ones that make sense.

## **HOW MUCH TIME WILL IT TAKE?**

GPS is structured into four units of eight weeks each. While students and families can rearrange the schedule however they want, it is scheduled for four days a week. As a program that covers two full high school credits for the year, we expect average students to take an average of two hours to complete the amount of work set down for each day with a few weeks having some extra work for larger projects or viewing a full length film.

These are averages, of course. Every student is unique. We know that families will tweak and substitute some books, skip one or two, add others on, especially for honors students. Some students work quickly, others work more slowly. It's up to individual families to help students manage the workload.

## **WHAT IS THE PARENT'S ROLE?**

GPS is written to the student. High school students should have some independence with their work. We've strived to give plenty of guidance for students in their learning.

However, students need support. There are checklists that begin each week of GPS. You should check in with your student and help them stay accountable and get work done. If your student has a planner or if you use other tools such as checklist apps or online reminders, help them prioritize getting core schoolwork, including GPS, finished.

Your student will get the most out of this program if you discuss with them what they're reading. Even if you don't read along for every book, you can ask them what they think and what they learned. Make sure what they say makes sense! We suggest watching films or reading along with your student for at least some books.

Your student also needs feedback for writing. There is more about providing feedback in the section about writing. Students cannot easily learn to improve their writing without feedback. That means that you or someone else should read the short answer questions and longer essay assignments for GPS and provide feedback.

If you read the full introduction, including the writing guide, and the notes to the parent that begin each unit, then you'll be in better shape to support your student.

## **GRADES AND QUIZZES**

There are no grades built into GPS. It is up to you to decide what grade to assign your student for completing the curriculum. If a student completes all the reading and assignments to your satisfaction, then we suggest considering that mastery and assigning an A grade. The only quizzes built into the program are the map quizzes that end each unit. If tests and quizzes are important to your homeschool, we suggest using the "Terms to Know" that begin each week as the basis for unit tests. Alternatively, you can use the "Summing It All Up" questions as a final exam for each unit. You can also use the rubrics for major assignments as a way of grading papers.

## **TRANSCRIPTS AND COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**

If you are homeschooling, then you are the ultimate decider of how to put GPS on your student's transcript for college. Depending on what other courses your student took and how you plan to present your student to colleges, you may make different decisions about what to emphasize in your description. Below are two suggestions that you can use as templates. For an honors student, you can add any additional titles the student read. You can fill in the title of any history textbook you used as reference as well.

Unless you only did part of GPS, this program is worth two full credits.

FOR GPS CORE 1

### **African/Asian History 1.0 or World History: Africa and Asia 1.0**

This is a world history course focusing on four different regions: Africa, the Middle East, the Indian subcontinent, and China and Japan. Students study history through readings, biographies, documentaries, and primary sources. In addition to textbook readings, books include but are not limited to *Africa: A Biography of the Continent* by John Reader, *The Dark Child* by Camara Laye, *Born a Crime* by Trevor Noah, *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi, *Islam: A Short History* by Karen Armstrong, *The Ocean of Churn* by Sanjeev Sanyal, and *Modern China: A Very Short Introduction* by Rana Mitter. Assignments include learning to answer detailed short essay questions and writing document based question essays and a culminating research paper. This course was in conjunction with a course focused on African and Asian literature.

## **World Literature 1.0 or World Literature: Africa and Asia 1.0**

This English course focuses on literature primarily from Africa and Asia. Students complete a wide variety of writing assignments, including literary analysis essays, persuasive essays, personal narrative essays, and creative writing. Writing tips are explored through readings, examples, and short writing exercises. Literary criticism is also explored with a theme for the year: heroes and the hero's journey. Works include but are not limited to: *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe, *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas, *The Ramayana* by N.K. Narayan, *Siddhartha* by Hermann Hesse, *Kitchen* by Banana Yoshimoto, and *Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress* by Dai Sijie. Excerpts were taken from *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, *The Book of Ruth*, *The Arabian Nights*, *The Rig-Veda*, *The Mahabharata*, and *Journey to the West*, among others. The textbook *World Masterpieces* from Prentice Hall was also used. This course was in conjunction with a course focused on African and Asian history.

## **Global Perspective Studies 1 (integrated history and English) 2.0**

Global Perspective Studies 1 is an integrated English and history course focused on Africa and Asia. Students study history through readings, historical fiction, documentaries, and primary sources. Literature readings complement historical readings and include poetry, excerpts from classical texts, classic novels, and recent works such as graphic novels. Students complete a wide variety of writing assignments, including literary analysis essays, persuasive essays, primary source based essays, personal narrative essays, and creative writing. Writing tips are explored through readings, examples, and short writing exercises. Literary criticism is also explored with a theme for the year: heroes and the hero's journey. Works include but are not limited to: *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe, *The Dark Child* by Camara Laye, *Africa: A Biography of the Continent* by John Reader, *Born a Crime* by Trevor Noah, *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi, *Islam: A Short History* by Karen Armstrong, *The Ramayana* by N.K. Narayan, *Siddhartha* by Hermann Hesse, *The Ocean of Churn* by Sanjeev Sanyal, and *Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress* by Dai Sijie. Excerpts were taken from *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, *The Book of Ruth*, *The Arabian Nights*, *The Rig-Veda*, *The Mahabharata*, and *Journey to the West*, among others. The textbook *World Masterpieces* from Prentice Hall was also used.

FOR GPS CORE 2

## **European History 1.0 or World History: Europe 1.0**

This is a European history course from ancient times to the present day. Emphasis is placed understanding the connections between Europe and the rest of the world. Students study history through readings, films, biographies, documentaries, and primary sources. In addition to textbook readings, books include *The Story of Greece and Rome* by Tony Spawforth, *Heretics and Heroes* by Thomas Cahill, *Tulipomania* by Mike Dash, *The Ghost Map* by Steven Johnson, and *Maus* by Art Spiegelman. Assignments include learning to answer detailed short essay questions, writing document based question essays, and performing basic research. This course was in conjunction with a course focused on European literature.

## **European Literature 1.0 or British and European Literature 1.0**

This English course focuses on literature primarily from Europe. Students complete a wide variety of writing assignments, including literary analysis essays, persuasive essays, personal narrative essays, and creative writing. Students complete a researched literary criticism essay with citations. Literary criticism is also explored with a theme for the year: villains and antagonists. Works include but are not limited to: *The Odyssey* by Homer, *Oedipus the King* by Sophocles, *Beowulf*, *Othello* by Shakespeare, *Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens, *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley, *The Metamorphosis* by Franz Kafka, *All Quiet on the*

*Western Front* by Erich Maria Remarque, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, and *White Teeth* by Zadie Smith. Excerpts were taken from classic works and epics and short stories and poetry were included. The textbook *World Masterpieces* from Prentice Hall was also used. This course was in conjunction with a course focused on European history.

## **Global Perspective Studies 2 (integrated history and English) 2.0**

Global Perspective Studies 2 is an integrated English and history course focused on Europe. Students study history through readings, historical fiction, documentaries, and primary sources. Literature readings complement historical readings and include poetry, excerpts from classical texts, classic novels, and recent works such as graphic novels. Students complete a wide variety of writing assignments, including literary analysis essays, persuasive essays, primary source based essays, personal narrative essays, research based essays, and creative writing. Literary criticism is also explored with a theme for the year: villains and antagonists. Works include but are not limited to: *The Story of Greece and Rome* by Tony Spawforth, *Tulipomania* by Mike Dash, *The Ghost Map* by Steven Johnson, *Maus* by Art Spiegelman, *The Odyssey* by Homer, *Beowulf*, *Othello* by Shakespeare, *Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens, *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley, *The Metamorphosis* by Franz Kafka, *All Quiet on the Western Front* by Erich Maria Remarque, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, and *White Teeth* by Zadie Smith. The textbook *World Masterpieces* from Prentice Hall was also used.

## **ADAPTING A SINGLE UNIT OR A SINGLE SUBJECT**

If you purchased a single unit of GPS, then you may be planning to use it alone. Each unit is worth one half credit. You can assign the credit as English, Social Studies, or simply “Humanities.”

Each unit of Core 1 stands alone very well. Occasionally, other units are mentioned and the program does build over time, but the focus is primarily on the individual books and assignments for the unit. The units in Core 2 are much more interconnected. However, a student can still study a particular period in history by using an individual unit in Core 2.

However, you may want to adapt it. Because units are geared toward completion in a quarter, you may want to adapt a unit to become a semester class. If so, students should spend two weeks doing the work for a single week.

### **Specific Tips for Core 1**

If your student is already doing writing in a yearlong English class, then you might want to skip the assignments from *Writing Tools*. You may also want to forgo our hero theme. You can use the color coding system to find which assignments these are. Yellow indicates it's our heroes theme. Light blue is our writing assignments. Some of the hero books go well with their units. For example, we would recommend keeping *Siddhartha* if you do the unit on India. However, you might not keep *The Tempest* if you chose the East Asia unit. *The Hate U Give* and *The Hero and the Crown* have themes that go with their units, but are not directly connected. Removing this piece does not make the program worth less credits overall. If you have any concerns, you can easily add another book or resource from the list that begins each unit.

If you're hoping to use just the history or literature portions of GPS, then you can also use the color coding as a guide. Dark blue indicates world literature assignments. Yellow indicates hero literature assignments. Orange indicates history. We would encourage you to consider adding in some of the literature and film assignments for history students since they enrich the study of history. Similarly, some of the history assignments, especially the short videos, would greatly enhance a literature study if you're focused on world literature.

## **Specific Tips for Core 2**

If you're hoping to use just the literature or just the history for GPS, you can easily cut the other assignments. We strongly suggest that you continue to use the yellow coded art and culture assignments for both history and literature students. The assignments that are specifically focused on our villain theme, as well as one graphic novel that begins the first unit, are also yellow coded. Other than the first novel, which is easily skipped, the villain theme is deeply integrated into the unit and difficult to fully skip if you're using the literature portion.

## **ADAPTING GPS TO STUDENTS WITH DIFFERENT NEEDS**

We assume that all families will adapt and tweak this program as needed. We encourage you to do so. You know your student best.

For honors and gifted students, adding in additional reading is a good option. There are additional book suggestions in the notes to parents that start each unit. However, we don't believe that all gifted student simply need more work to make a course right for them. You may choose to swap some titles out instead of adding more. You may also choose to add more writing assignments, lengthen some writing assignments, or simply hold students to a higher standard for writing. Adding in more in depth discussions may be another way to make GPS fit a gifted learner.

For students who have specific challenges, we encourage you to use whatever accommodations typically work for your student. Using dictation software or scribing for students with issues such as dysgraphia is obviously a good idea. There are audiobooks available for nearly all the titles in GPS that are not graphic novels. There are film versions available of many of the books. The additional book resources that begin each unit typically list at least one or two options that are easier, remedial, or graphic novels.

Students who will take longer should be given extra time or less work. If you have a struggling learner, it is fine to have your student do 240 hours of work (the typical definition of a high school credit is 120 hours of instruction) to get the two credits for GPS, even if they do not finish everything.

Whether it's through added discussion, help with time management, or adapting materials, all profiles of students will benefit from teaching that is involved and hands on at least some of the time.



## *Our Philosophy and Approach*

### **OUR HISTORY PHILOSOPHY**

We believe that history is an important part of a student's education. We can't understand the world around us, the literature we read, the motives of other people, without studying history. History has multiple connections to events today. We try to forge those connections where especially relevant. We encourage every family and classroom to discuss them even more than the curriculum specifically suggests.

We believe that history should not focus solely on the Western world, as it often does in the United States. As part of that, we believe that beginning a study of history with the European Renaissance or Enlightenment, as is common in high schools now, is misleading to students because it only focuses on the period during which the West was ascendant, and ignores the flourishing earlier civilizations in the rest of the world. We feel especially strongly that students should spend a year on non-Western history in some form, which is why we begin our program with a year focused on Asia and Africa.

Studying history is a balance between learning specifics and learning broad patterns and generalizations. Many programs now don't ask students to know any specific names, dates, or events. We think students should be familiar with some of these. While we have vast information at our fingertips now, students need enough background knowledge in order to successfully read about a topic. We don't push a heavy program of memorization. However, we encourage students to learn the basic terms that begin each week and to learn key skills like note taking and keeping a visual map.

When students study history, they inevitably meet issues of controversy. We believe it's important not to shy away from these, but to use them to engage with history. High school students are old enough to read about difficult topics, such as genocide or war. It is imperative that students understand these topics. While we have tried to give warnings when content may be difficult for sensitive students, and while students may need to skip specific films or books, they should not entirely shy away from these difficult topics.

## HISTORY ASSIGNMENTS

We believe that there's nothing wrong with textbooks and that having access to a basic reference is essential. Trade books like those that are core to our program often do not cover everything.

Students are expected to look up, read about, and synthesize information on their own in order to answer the history questions. Often, these are covered by the assigned history readings and videos. However, not always.

In order to complete GPS, students must have access to history reference books. You can choose any world history textbook, including older books. We recommend:

*World History: Connections to Today* by Prentice Hall  
*World History: Patterns of Interaction* by Holt McDougal Littel  
*World History: The Human Experience* by Glencoe

Some of those texts are still in print and have new editions. Please do not buy a new edition. There are many editions for less than \$10 used online. You are not limited to those titles. Any basic world history textbook for high school or even college or AP World History for an advanced student will work fine.

You can also choose a history encyclopedia for this purpose. Two good ones are:

*World History: From the Dawn of Civilization to the Present Day* by Adam Hart-Davis  
*World History: From the Ancient World to the Information Age* by Philip Parker

Finally, we realistically know that students will likely turn to Wikipedia when they don't immediately find what they're looking for. In several studies, Wikipedia has been shown to be as accurate about most topics as encyclopedias (and, since textbooks always have errors, likely as accurate as those too). Wikipedia is not considered a reliable resource for an academic citation. Students should always read it with caution. However, the information you're likely to find there is likely to be "good enough." Still, we strongly encourage old fashioned books instead. Wikipedia is often too detailed for students just beginning to learn about new places and time periods! Textbooks do a better job of helping students find the most important facts, dates, and names. Help your students understand why the textbook as a reference is superior.

## OUR LITERATURE PHILOSOPHY

We believe that literature is a way to gain an understanding of other perspectives about the world. That means reading literature by a diverse group of writers from all over the world, including in our own backyards. We have striven to provide a curriculum that has literature by male and female writers of many different racial and ethnic backgrounds, writing about their lives across different time periods and at different stages of life. Letting authors tell their own stories from their own cultures is an important value to us that we hope is expressed in our literature lists.

We believe that there isn't one, singular literature list that students must read to be "well-read." The book lists that comprise our program are just one list. However, we think that reading great authors from throughout time is important. High school is a time to get to know classic authors. That means reading a wide variety of literature from across history, from ancient times all the way up to the last fifty years. Without getting a sense of the greats who defined their times, places, and genres, students can't ever fully appreciate newer literature or understand allusions.

The second purpose of high school literature is to continue increasing reading skills, including through learning literary analysis. For this purpose, sometimes choosing contemporary books is more useful. Graphic novels and young adult literature can be the perfect way to learn how to dissect a text, use quotes, and identify symbolism. It's also important that students find books they identify with or that really speak to them. Whether those are young adult novels or classics that have long been popular with younger readers, we've tried to keep that in mind as well.

Too many of the literature programs we've seen swing too far in one direction. Either they focus only on the oldest classics without any eye toward student enjoyment or the modern world, or they focus too heavily on recent popular fiction at the expense of helping a student get a grounding in the classics. We're also mindful that students need to read widely and that means reading more than before for many students. On the other hand, it's important to balance and not simply read book after book.

Our goal is for students to emerge from high school with a strong foundation in the sort of literature that is widely recognized as great from every corner of the world. We hope to produce students who want to build on that foundation by reading even more widely because they love literature.

## **OUR WRITING PHILOSOPHY**

Our philosophy about writing is that students should develop their own voices by writing widely in different formats. We expose students to tools and models for their writing that can help them fit their words into different formats. We guide them in doing organization and pre-writing. However, we don't break down the writing process into extremely incremental steps. We believe that less is more with writing, so we don't require students to write an essay a week and only ask that students polish a relatively small number of pieces of writing during the school year.

We think many other writing programs focus too heavily on academic writing, especially with a thesis. This writing is extremely important and we do cover it repeatedly, but students will likely need to write in other ways in their lives. We also believe that many programs make writing too formulaic. Formulas in writing can be good ways to get started, but they can also quickly become too binding. It's important to both learn some of the rules and learn how to bend and break them.

Feedback is the most essential element to helping students grow. We support independence for high school students, which is why GPS is written to the student. The following pages contain checklists and organizers to help writers be independent. The assignments in GPS always give specific instructions. However, students must get feedback from a more experienced writer in order to fully grow.

This feedback should be gentle and supportive. While you should help correct issues, do not focus on spelling, punctuation, and grammar when giving feedback on a piece of writing. If students are significantly behind on those topics, we suggest adding in regular practice through a separate program from ours. Always start by emphasizing the positive in a piece of writing. Then pick one or two things to really help the student work on. If a student's writing has multiple issues, then bombarding them with advice about how to fix them all in one assignment won't pay off long term.

You can only work on a few things at a time with writing. We suggest different focuses based on the writing tools that we introduce to students. However, if your student struggles with something else, begin there.

Alongside the writing guide for students on the following pages, major assignments have checklists for

the teacher or parent to use when reading writing. Are you unsure of how to help students? We'll try to walk you through it.

No one writing assignment will make or break a student. Students always have time to grow as writers. Always keep that in mind.

## **WRITING ASSIGNMENTS**

Our approach to writing in Global Perspective Studies has four parts.

First, we ask students to use freewriting in their studies. Freewriting with GPS means that students set a time for 20-30 minutes and write on the topic. This topic might be a personal response to a novel or topic. It might be gathering thoughts about something they've learned about. It might be writing down observations of art or photographs relevant to their studies. During a freewrite, students should try to stay on topic, but they shouldn't worry if they explore tangents. Grammar, spelling, and punctuation don't matter at all. A freewrite can be typed or handwritten. The most important thing is to keep writing throughout the time. We use freewriting as a way for students to process their thoughts, prewrite for longer assignments, and just practice their ability to get words on a page.

Second, in GPS Core 1, we ask students to do exercises designed to introduce them to good writing practices and tools. For Core One, we use the book *Writing Tools* by Roy Peter Clark. This is a book aimed at adults who like to write, but it's filled with great advice about improving writing. We adapt and create our own exercises geared toward students for the tools in Clark's book. The purpose of these exercises is to try out better ways to write. Sometimes we ask students to try applying a tool to a piece of writing they're polishing. Sometimes, the only purpose is to introduce a new way of approaching writing. These are practices that students won't incorporate right away. GPS Core 2 also includes a few exercises in this vein. Clark's book can be used on its own if you want to expose your student to some of these tips if you're doing Core 2.

Third, we have students do short answer questions. There's more about modeling short answer questions below. For most questions, a full, quality answer will be several sentences long. It will incorporate information from readings, research, or videos. These questions are a way for students to practice elaborating on their reading, making connections, and analyzing what they learn. Students may struggle with them at first. Some students have trouble answering in full sentences or being specific. Other students have trouble condensing an answer into just a few sentences. We have much more guidance about how to approach them below.

Finally, we assign a wide variety of writing forms for students to try out. These are primarily different forms of essays. We especially want students to practice a variety of different essay forms and not get stuck in one format. That means that students try their hands at creative writing and personal narratives of the kind they need to write for college essays in addition to thesis papers of various kinds. In each unit, we ask that students polish at least one longer work. That means revising and editing the paper and that means getting feedback from a teacher, parent, or tutor about the work. Feedback is how students grow as writers.

## **USING THE INTERNET, RESEARCHING, AND OTHER PERILS**

Internet access and use is core to many parts of our program. We ask students to use videos that we have vetted and chosen from YouTube, as well as to do their own explorations online. We believe that teens should have this type of access to the internet. It is always a good idea for teens to leave "safe search"

features enabled when they're online. It's also best practice for computers to be used in a visible area near adults. Parents should obviously decide for themselves what other internet monitoring measures you'd like to take, such as checking internet histories and using special control software. It is our belief that it is important that students learn to sort through information online. They need guidance for this.

When there are topics of particular controversy, such as apartheid or the Crusades, we give warnings that information online may be biased or inaccurate. Students should always be alert to the possibility of "fake news" when they search online. It is imperative that parents or teachers keep conversations about learning open with students. We highly recommend Crash Course's Navigating Digital Information Course, found on YouTube. This has great support for families and students.

Students should recognize that the less they know about a topic, the harder it is to spot bias and the more important it is to stick to sources they trust. The bias is easy to spot in many sources, but not in others unless you know enough about the topic to question how it's presented.

When students do research online for an academic paper, they need to realize that not all sources are created equal. While a casual internet video might be great to help them learn about a topic, You cannot use it as a source for a research paper. While open source resources like Wikipedia have been shown to be surprisingly accurate overall, they also cannot be used as academic sources. We cover some of this in Core 1 in the final unit where students write a research paper and in Core 2, in the third unit when students write a literary research paper.

At this point in your student's academic education, finding exactly the right sources isn't the most important thing. It's more important that they focus on honing their writing. It's also more important that they understand why citing sources is essentially and what plagiarism is.

Avoiding plagiarism is important even for taking notes and informal writing like freewrites. Because students often take notes online now, they cut and paste information directly. That can lead to some big mistakes down the road if they cut and paste a second time into an assignment, even an informal one. Students need to understand why this is deeply wrong. It's also useful if students can understand why hand writing out notes and summarizing notes can be more useful than cutting and pasting. There are lots of studies about this that show why summarizing is good for our brains and why doing it by hand often works better.

Overall, while there are some warnings and some specific lessons about these issues throughout GPS, we trust parents to check in on their students' internet use as well as that they're following good research methods and avoiding plagiarism.



## *Writing Guide and Tips*

This guide is to help students complete the assignments in GPS. Every assignment contains instructions. Longer assignments have a checklist rubric. However, if a student needs more support, that support is found here. This guide is also for parents or anyone giving feedback to a student on their writing or trying to support their writing. Look here for examples and tips. You can refer back to this section throughout the year.

### **WRITING A THESIS PAPER**

We assume that students entering high school have been introduced to thesis papers before but may need multiple reminders about how to approach them. A thesis paper follows a format. This format can be bent in all kinds of directions, but it usually can't be completely broken. Some students find it comforting that there are rules to follow and a format to fit into. Other students hate that they can't write a thesis paper however they want. When the thesis paper format is working, it helps the reader and feels natural to the writer. The writer uses the format, the format doesn't pen in the writer.

The format for a thesis paper is this. Each Roman numeral in the outline represents a new paragraph.

#### I. Introduction

- *The introduction starts with a hook, which is a general statement designed to interest the reader.*
- *The introduction is sure to define the question and any important terms the reader might need to know to understand it.*
- *The introduction includes a thesis statement. The thesis should be a bold statement that everything in the paper relates back to.*

#### II. Body Paragraphs

- *There should be at least two body paragraphs.*
- *Body paragraphs should start with a topic sentences that let the reader know what the paragraph will be about.*

○ *There should be at least 2-3 supporting facts in a body paragraph.*

### III. Conclusion

○ *The conclusion should restate the thesis to remind the reader what the paper was all about.*

○ *The conclusion should ideally also contain a final big thought, connecting the thesis to a greater topic.*

This outline is turned into a paper. The more details and specifics in each body paragraph, the better.

## **RULES FOR WRITING A THESIS PAPER:**

1. It needs a thesis in an introduction.

You can't skip this part.

2. The thesis must be a statement.

No questions, even if they sound thoughtful or clever. They might make a good hook, but it's not a thesis.

3. No using contractions.

Formal writing has formal rules. One of them is no contractions.

4. Body paragraphs need topic sentences.

Great writers learn to sneak these in so you don't feel like you're reading a headline at the start of each paragraph. However, readers need to be reminded what you're talking about.

5. All the points have to relate back to the thesis.

Don't go off on tangents.

6. Citing your sources is important.

It's academically dishonest not to say where your information came from. Sometimes, a paper is based solely on a novel, set of documents, or textbook selection and you get to skip this step because it's assumed. You also don't have to cite things that are common knowledge, such as the name of the president or that the sky is blue. However, don't let that make you lazy when you do need to cite a specific fact.

## **TIPS FOR WRITING A THESIS PAPER:**

1. Pretend your reader is a blank slate.

Lots of students are immersed in the topic they're writing about. They're writing for a teacher who knows all about the topic. So sometimes, they forget to put in important stuff. I've seen papers that simply say things like, "This happened because of Rule 47," or "Jane obviously solved the problem." You may know that Rule 47 is some important law you've just learned about and that Jane is the main character's wealthy sister. However, when you don't define things, your imaginary reader is lost.

2. Connect all the dots.

This is tied to your reader being a blank slate. Not only do you need to define all the terms, characters, and events for this imaginary reader, you also need to show them why they're important. It's not enough to say that Jane was rich. You have to say, therefore she spent her money. It's not enough to say therefore she spent her money. You have to say she spent it on the pony that would allow the protagonist to escape. Connect the dots. Spell out all the steps.

### 3. Less is more.

You have to define everything and connect the dots, but don't get carried away. Keep your argument tight. Don't add in extra facts that aren't related. I see students do this a lot when they're excited about a fact or some new information. If it doesn't support your argument, don't include it. The paper's purpose isn't to show off everything you learned. It's to argue a specific thesis statement.

### 4. Don't skip the planning stage.

Lots of students try to skip the planning stage. We recommend using "messy outlines" to plan papers. However, it's not the only way to do it. Whatever works for you is allowed as long as you do it. Lots of students skip the planning stage only to regret it when they have to rewrite later.

### 5. Don't worry about grammar and spelling until the very end.

Fix all the grammar problems in one go at the end. If using a program like Grammarly helps you, then you should, but try to learn from it. You will have to write timed essays without the help of a program for many tests later on.

## 6 "RULES" FOR THESIS PAPERS THAT AREN'T TRUE!

### 1. The thesis must be one sentence.

Actually, the thesis can be two or even three sentences. One is usually best, but it's not a rule.

### 2. The thesis has to be at the beginning of or the end of the introduction.

Putting the thesis at the end of the introduction is often a good idea. But it's not a rule! You can put the thesis anywhere in the introduction you'd like. In really lengthy essays (we won't be writing any this long in GPS), it might even be at the end of a multi-paragraph introductory section.

### 3. The thesis must follow this formula: "Statement because reason one, reason two, and reason three."

That's a good format for a thesis statement because it previews your main reasons for your reader. However, it's not the only format. There are lots of ways to preview your points without putting it in the thesis.

### 4. Your thesis paper must have three body paragraphs.

Nope. Three is a really good number. Writers and storytellers follow what's called the "rule of three" all the time. However, while you want to approach most short thesis papers expecting to write about three body paragraphs, it's not a rule. Some thesis papers have two body paragraphs to compare and contrast. Some research papers have dozens of body paragraphs, usually organized into sections. If you have four excellent supporting points, make four paragraphs.

### 5. Your conclusion must contain your thesis stated exactly the same way.

Actually, that's just lazy writing. If you're writing a timed essay, it might end up happening, but don't do that on a planned essay. Find a new way to say it if possible.

### 6. No first person allowed.

This is a tricky one. Most student thesis papers shouldn't use the first person. That means no "I think..." or "In my opinion..." However, this is not a hard and fast rule. Great writers break this rule all the time. That doesn't mean you necessarily should. You likely don't have any personal experience to add and inserting yourself into most of your papers that are about history and literature will distract the reader from the thesis. Remember, it's not about you; it's about the thesis! As you really master the thesis paper, don't let

this so-called rule hold you back from bending the form if you belong in the paper.

## **WHAT IS AND ISN'T PLAGIARISM?**

We cover this topic at various points in GPS, so you may see this information repeated. That's because it's super important to understand.

### **Plagiarism is copying.**

Copying anything that you didn't write or create without either putting it in quotes or crediting the author very clearly is plagiarism. That includes copying just part of a sentence.

### **Plagiarism is MORE than copying.**

Sometimes students think that as long as they don't copy something directly, then it's okay and it's not plagiarism. However, plagiarism is more than just copying the exact words someone wrote. It's also copying their ideas or the structure of their work without giving them credit. If you take someone else's personal story and retell it as your own, you may not have used their words, but that's plagiarism. If you use the structure of someone else's essay point by point and rephrase everything, that's plagiarism. If you write about a great idea in your own words, but it's not your idea and you don't credit the creator, then that's plagiarism. If you write about a variety of things and only credit some of the research, that's plagiarism too.

### **Beware Ctrl-Z**

Cutting and pasting is a great feature of computers! But when you're doing research, it's the easiest way to get yourself in hot water. Summarizing what you learned is good for your brain, will help you synthesize it later, and will help you avoid getting in trouble by forgetting that those are not your words. Save the Ctrl-Z for the website address or that one tricky name you're having trouble spelling.

### **Citations**

When you were younger, you probably wrote a report for school without citing your sources. This is a form of plagiarism. When you're 7 and writing your first report about a dinosaur, it's not that big a deal. Hopefully, since then, you've learned that citing your sources is important. By high school, you shouldn't do anything without listing your sources. In GPS, sometimes we ask you to do some informal research and writing. Then, you can just make a list of your sources. We also ask you to do formal writing. In those cases, we use the MLA format for citations.

MLA is just one style of citations. You'll find more about that in each instance that we require it. There are other citation formats. These days, getting a citation is as easy as using a generator to create one. When you do research, always be sure to note the title, author, publisher, and publication date. Plus the publication if it's an article in a journal. Those are the key pieces of information you need to look up or create the citation. If you use a website, you can cut and paste the website address, but note the date you accessed it.

Citations add what you write into a chain of academic authors. Every academic piece tells you where they found their information so you can look it up and evaluate each fact and idea. That's true for your writing as well. You are a link in that chain. Right now, it's just practice. But one day, you may have ideas others cite! You want to maintain the integrity of your ideas and those of others.

### **The penalties for plagiarism are harsh.**

Your parents or teachers will decide the penalties for plagiarism while you're in high school. Sometimes students make honest mistakes and don't cite a source or cut and paste some text and end up forgetting

it was not their own words. You are still learning. Part of what you need to learn is to avoid these mistakes. When you go to college or maybe if you take a dual enrollment class, plagiarism is an automatic zero on an assignment. It can lead to academic probation or even an automatic failure in a whole class. You can even be removed from the school for plagiarism if it was egregious, even on your first offense. In the working world, if you're found to have plagiarized, you will almost certainly be fired. If you hold a position in journalism, science research, academic teaching, or other fields, your entire reputation and career could be lost. In other words, don't form it as a bad habit now.

## WHAT DOES A GOOD FREEWRITE LOOK LIKE?

Spelling, grammar, punctuation, and vocabulary don't matter in a freewrite. Organization doesn't matter either. The only way to write a bad freewrite is to go way off topic or not use the time writing.

A good freewrite about women in the Muslim world might look a little like this:

*I don't really know what i think about muslim women because I am just learning about it. I have a friend at co-op who is muslim and she wears a head scarf. Some of her scarves are really gorgeous and have these tassels on the ends but I was worried about asking her about it because I'm not sure if that's okay. But I know she didn't wear it when she was little, like a few years ago she still just had her hair. In Persepolis, the main character starts out really religious but then she isn't so much by the end. So its kind of like in that movie that I forget the name of where the girl wanted to have a bike. They wanted to make her cover her hair except sometimes she did and sometimes she didn't. Marji gets angry about some of the rules about wearing her headcovering. I think if I was Muslim, I wouldn't want to do that and I don't really see the point because...*

It continues on like that. Here's what's good!

- The student stayed on topic. Head covering is a relevant topic to women in Islam. It's not the only one, but it's definitely a relevant topic.
- The student brought in questions. If the whole freewrite is just the student saying they don't know what they think and writing out questions they have about the topic, that's fine!
- The student mentioned specific things they read and saw for GPS. That's great!
- The student wrote a sizable paragraph. That means they used the time to actually write!

Here are some things that you don't need to worry about!

- The student used run-on sentences. It doesn't matter.
- The student's organization jumps around. That's okay.
- The student didn't find the specific name of the film they referenced. That's not a big deal.
- The student made lots of capitalization errors. So what?

For some assignments, students can use what they wrote about in a freewrite to build on for a bigger writing assignment. When that happens, they need to think about organization and specific details, like getting the right names and words for things. They have to clean up any grammar issues when they polish the paper. But the majority of freewrites are just asking students to process what they read, saw, or learned about. Processing helps information sink in.

## WHAT MAKES A GOOD SHORT ANSWER QUESTION?

Short answer questions aren't always all that short. Sometimes they can be answered in 1-2 sentences. However, they often require a paragraph. The most important thing for a short answer question are the following:

1. The information must be correct.
2. It must make sense.
3. It must answer every part of the question, not just one part.
4. It should be specific and not veer off into over-generalizations.

Here are some examples. This question comes from the GPS unit on India:

What rivals did the British East India Company have in the Indian Ocean for influence? What products did the British want? What settlements did they establish?

### Example 1:

*The British really wanted to dominate the world. They took over colonies everywhere they could. This is like in Africa where they were abusive to the people living there. They did the same thing to India. And this eventually led to leaders like Gandhi throwing them out.*

### Evaluation:

This is not a good enough answer to pass. It's over-general. It veers off into information about other places and time periods. It doesn't answer the question. This type of answer is sadly common for new high school students. Don't despair! They can improve! However, they need the feedback that this isn't good enough. Even if you don't know the full answer yourself, you can see that this answer is insufficient and doesn't fully answer the question.

### Example 2:

*The first European traders to arrive in India were the Dutch East India Company. Back in the early days of colonization, the Dutch were surprisingly powerful. Their company took over lands in Indonesia and Malaysia. They set up cities in India and were already established when the British arrived in India. In fact, the first British ships were basically pirates who robbed other European ships.*

### Evaluation:

Lots of great information, including lots of specifics about the Dutch. Also, the information is correct. The Dutch were Britain's biggest rivals for influence in India at first. However, the student totally forgot about answering the other two parts of the question. If this problem recurs on many questions, the student should go back and finish them.

### Example 3:

*The Portuguese and the Dutch were the biggest rivals for Britain in India. The British set up trading cities for themselves in Madras in 1639 and Bombay in 1668. They wanted to trade for cotton, tea, and spices.*

### Evaluation:

This question doesn't have the same details and flourish as the previous question, but it does answer all the parts of the question. It also includes dates and specific place names, which is always good. This is the

only one of the three that passes.

Note that the passing question didn't include some good information that the previous answer had. Not every good answer will have every piece of information. It's okay for students to leave out some points, as long as they have other points. The third example doesn't include every settlement, every trading product, or every rival the British faced.