Montgomery Bell Academy
English Department
Theme Directions

I. The writing process

During your years at M.B.A., you should develop a writing process. Depending on your grade level, you will learn various methods to discover topics, organize ideas, and complete an essay. Your writing process should advance the following skills:

A. Writing an argumentative thesis statement;

B. Developing the ability to think critically and independently; i.e., ways for you to take the broad idea in the theme question and break it into topics and subtopics so that the idea can be argued in relation to the thesis statement and topic sentences;

C. Organizing a coherent, in-depth outline that suggests clear topic sentences for paragraphs, strong assertions to develop these topic sentences, and evidence from the literature to support these assertions;

D. Writing a rough draft

E. Revising rough drafts

F. Proofing final drafts

II. Form for turning in major themes

A. Type or word-process all parts of the final draft.

B. Double space the final draft and use a standard 12-point font.

C. Title page
   1. Write the title of your theme (capitalized and punctuated correctly), your full name, your English class, and the date on four consecutive lines, centered in the middle of the page.
   2. Three spaces below the date, write and sign the full pledge.

D. Final outline
1. Write the title, purpose, thesis, plan, outline, or some variation of these elements appropriate for the grade level as directed by the teacher.
2. Number each page in the upper right corner.
3. Observe one-inch margins around each page.

E. Final draft
1. Repeat your title at the top of the first page of the final draft.
2. Number the pages consecutively, beginning with page 1.
3. Observe one-inch margins around each page.
4. Do not write on the back of any page.
5. Create a separate page to indicate the source of quotations you include in your theme. At the top of this page, write Work Cited (or Works Cited if you cite more than one source.) This page is also numbered consecutively with the final draft.

F. Staple all rough draft materials into one packet, organizing pages in the order in which you created them. Staple all final draft materials into another packet, following this order: title page, final outline, final draft, and Works Cited page.

G. Use a regular paper clip to secure these two packets; place the final draft packet on top.

H. Failure to submit a theme on the assigned theme day results in a penalty of ten points per day. A weekend counts as one day. A student must be absent from school at least two days prior to a theme day to earn an exemption because of illness. Extenuating circumstances may call for other conditions; these will be determined by your teacher and/or the department head.

III. Form for correcting themes

A. In addition to written comments throughout your theme, your teacher will have used abbreviations or Harbrace Handbook numbers to indicate grammatical and form errors in your theme. These numbers will be noted in the margins of your theme. You will have a key for the abbreviations or numbers.

B. Using a pencil, you should first number the errors in the entire theme.

C. Then on the back of the page preceding each error and in approximately the same place in which the error occurs, you should correct each mistake. This correction can be brief, but it must be complete and accurate. Seek assistance from your teacher if necessary, but do so prior to the day on which the corrected theme is due.

D. Each misspelled word must be written correctly ten times.

E. Your corrected theme must be signed by a parent, preferably near the grade.
F. Your teacher has the option of counting the corrected theme as a grade. Corrections can also include re-writing part or all of a theme.

G. Failure to submit a corrected, parent-signed theme counts as a double zero homework grade. Both tasks must be completed on time to avoid earning this penalty.

H. A double-zero homework grade is the penalty for each day the corrected, signed theme is late.