**East of Eden- Paper 2 feedback**

\*Introduction needs to clearly imply the question- use the words from the prompt:

*-“representational of the time and place in which they were written”*

*-“context has enriched and enhanced the understanding of East of Eden…”*

*-“these texts both reflect and challenge the spirit of the times.”*

\*Remember that your introduction creates a first impression for the reader…..make it count.

\*Thesis needs to include theme- even if the prompt does not ask for it! Without theme, you either eliminate or limit the opportunity for analysis. Theme allows you to answer the “so what’?

\*Far more evidence is needed throughout. That is a suggestion on most students’ papers. You are not proving your points with evidence from the text….and if you are- *(see below)*

\*You need **specific examples** from the text! Stop with the general evidence…..”Aron is always longing for a mother.” That is not evidence; that is an assertion which needs to be proven by specific evidence.

**\*And** **another thing with regards to evidence**- you can’t just pick and choose aspects of a character. Characters do not operate in a vacuum. You can’t discuss Kate only as a business woman. You can’t talk about Lee only as an immigrant who is stereotyped. You can’t talk about Cal only as being bad and learning to choose to be good. All of these characters are complex. That is what you should address. Along those same lines…..

\*Do not oversimplify ideas or concepts of the text. It implies a superficial understanding of the work.

*-As the novel continues, Kate begins to feel human emotion and is sad that she can’t connect with people.*

*-Cal learns “timshel” and realizes that he is combination of both good and bad.*

*-Timshel means “thou mayest”; a person can choose to be evil or good.*

*If you are doing any of these things (lack of evidence, oversimplification ect…) in the interest of time,* ***STOP!*** *Do more with less. You do not have to discuss 3 different social commentaries. Choose one good one (or two at the most) and do a better job with analysis. Having well-chosen, specific evidence will help with better analysis.*

THIS REQUIRES PERCEPTIVE, CLOSE READING AND ENGAGING IN CLASS!!

Also….

\*You must include context! That is part of Criterion A! You need to be thorough in your explanation of context. You can’t just say, “…people were more religious at this time.” That is too vague. Context should be part of the discussion.

\*Watch your names- there were a lot of transposed names of characters….Abra believes Adam has created a picture of her as a perfect woman…. Charles takes Aron to see his mother… Cathy finally finds true love and happiness with Hindley…you can’

**Specific question issues:**

* For Q4: the paper needs to be about the text and how context helps you understand the text. Your paper should not be a discussion of contexts with minimal references to the text
* For Q5: if you discuss a concept that “changes” you must be clear about the change you are going to write about. Is it a change within the text(s) a change from one text to the other or a change from the established understanding of the concept? You need to make that clear.
* For Q6: You must discuss both the way the text reflects the times AND challenges the time period. You also need to make a distinction between the time in which it is set and the time in which it is written. Do not compare characters in one time period with the spirit of another…..that doesn’t make sense.

**Subject report:**

**Struggles:**

Some candidates seemed ill prepared to respond to works of literature. These candidates did not appear to understand the texts they had studied and often attempted to engage in narrative retelling. Their responses often simplified the question and identified examples of what was being asked without addressing how those examples led to any understanding. These papers were often very short and undeveloped.

While candidates were often prepared to discuss context, for some the discussion of the historical context of a work, became a simplified biography of the author—with only vague references to the texts. As a result, some candidates, not fully understanding either the text or the question, retreated to summary and descriptive narration.

Struggling candidates had difficulty structuring and organizing their responses. They identified an aspect of the question in their introduction, but gave little sense of why their chosen texts reflected this term (see “home” or “artificial”). Conclusions in these papers were at times vague or going against their introductions.

**What was well done:**

Many candidates organized their papers well, including an introduction which defined their terms “intolerance” or “atmosphere” or “artificial” or “home” as well as a general introduction to the texts and their context. They established an argument around the given question and guided the reader through the entire process (although if the chosen question was not clearly understood the structure was often directed at the works being discussed and not to the question being addressed).

**What to do to get better:**

Practice with the questions—understand what is being asked, and the direction of the argument. *For example, question 1 asks students to identify some forms of intolerance and explain the effects of this intolerance on both the victims and the intolerant. The question for some students though, seemed to stop with only identifying some forms of intolerance.*

Practice organizing papers so that the arguments are clear and focused—**use the words of the question in the introductions and conclusions.**

**Practice avoiding generalizations by giving evidence from the texts for all of the assertions that are made.**

For those whose handwriting is a problem, double space your work.

**Sample introductory paragraphs:**

Q4: Context, whether it be social, biographical or political is hugely influential in the creation of any piece of literature. Often the author’s own fears and the social climate of the time are essential for the complete understanding of a work. *East of Eden* by John Steinbeck is no exception. Awareness of Steinbeck’s own life and the biblical context of *East of Eden,* among other contexts, becomes essential when attempting to recognize and understand Steinbeck’s primary purpose, which is to show that, like himself and his characters, any person has the ability to overcome destruction in their lives to achieve their greatness.

Q5: In society, passionate love, both romantic and familial, is often described as an objective to strive for, what one should truly seek in a relationship. However, in both *East of Eden* by John Steinbeck and *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Bronte, the authors shift from conveying this concept as a positive influence to a destructive force that negatively impacts the lives of their characters. In *East of Eden*, Charles, Adam, and Aron all are weakened as a result of their passionate love. Similarly, in *Wuthering Heights*, Bronte establishes that passionate love is all-consuming and dangerous by demonstrating the miserable lives Catherine and Heathcliff lead as a result of it. Thus, the authors of both texts use their works to change the way the concept of passionate love is represented, establishing the theme that passionate love beyond reason is destructive.

Q6: As authors construct literary works, often the connection established with the audience plays on common knowledge and understanding of the contextual time period. In referencing such understanding of an era, the author may then reflect or disagree accordingly to aid in the development of a universal theme. For the novel, *East of Eden*, written by John Steinbeck, and the play, “Hamlet” by William Shakespeare, both authors challenge and reflect the societal spirits during their respective time periods. Ultimately, through the reflections and challenges, both literary works develop the motif of the human condition and the overall theme that each individual must internally battle conflicting dualities in the nature of choice (good or evil, action or thinking) before being able to reach a state of greatness on their own.