Freshman English

Ms. Bell

**Assignment: Letter to Sandra Cisneros or your Favorite Author**

**Background**: Many times we feel disconnected from the authors of novels we read even though we feel very connected to the material itself. This will be an opportunity for you to tell an author about yourself and ask questions to learn more about them, and learn how to successfully craft a narrative within a **2-page letter**. Many authors love to hear from people who have read their work. Even if the author is unable to read the letter, this assignment provides a chance to write more informally than you would in an academic essay, but still organize your thoughts enough that the addressee can understand. In lieu of a favorite author, you may write to Sandra Cisneros about *The House on Mango Street*.

**Purpose**: This assignment asks you to 1) reflect back on a memory of reading your favorite book (or *THMS*), 2) write this in narrative form, 3) analyze and explain what you liked about the book, and 4) pose thoughtful questions to the author.

**Audience**: You will be writing to the author of your chosen book. If the writer has a public address, the letter will be sent to them after you have a conference with me and write a final revision. Any responses we get will be posted in the classroom.

**Criteria for Success**: To be a complete letter, your writing needs to include-

* An **introduction to who you are** that describes not just what town you live in and what school you go to, but what things you like or dislike about them. You can write about any facet of your life or personality, but it must tell the author something interesting about yourself.
* A **narrative** with a clear beginning, middle and end that details the **context and experience** of reading whatever book you chose. To brainstorm, answer a few of the following questions: Why were you reading this book? Where were you when you read it? How long did you spend on it? How did you feel as you read? What major opinions did you have about it, and did they change over time? Would you consider re-reading it, and if so, when? Who would you recommend it to?
* An **analysis** of why this book is so important to you (what did it teach you? what significance does it hold in your broader beliefs or opinions, or in your daily life?)
* A conclusion that poses at least **3 questions** to the author.

**1st Draft Due**: Monday, October 3 – graded on completion

**Peer Review**: Wednesday, October 5 (in class) – graded on participation

**Final Draft Due**: Friday, October 7 – graded by criteria

**Conferences**: Oct. 10-14, as scheduled.

**Final revision**: Due 2 days after conference, sent to author.