

Personal Development Activity

Directions

Each student will complete one project selected from below for each quarter. Concert Reviews, Research Papers and Solo Projects are limited to one per semester. For example, if you choose to do a concert review first quarter, then you will need to choose either a research paper, music theory or a solo performance for the second quarter. Each project is out of 200 points.

IMEA Auditions

Participation in these festivals is a prestigious and highly sought after achievement by high school musicians. Those accepted into the District VII Senior Chorus become eligible for the All-State choral ensembles based on the same audition results. The District Festival is held on a Saturday in November and the All-State Festival is a three day event in January held in Peoria. The festivals are led by conductors of the highest caliber, and both are experiences that will be remembered for a lifetime.

This is a unique project available only to members of Concert Choir. To complete the project, simply prepare the audition materials and attend the audition. Upon completion of your audition, you will receive credit for the Semester 1, Quarter 1 project. This is a pass/fail option based on whether or not you completed the entire audition process. If you are selected to the District VII chorus, you will then, in addition, receive credit for the Semester 1, Quarter 2 project. If not selected, then one of the other project options will need to be completed for Semester 1, Quarter 2.

Concert Reviews

The length of the review should be at least 300 words – it is acceptable to use more if that is what it takes to describe the concert. Provide the following information at the beginning of the review: your name, the date of the concert, the name of the group or performers, and the concert location.

The first paragraph should introduce the concert to the reader – for example, you could mention that it included an outstanding soloist with an ensemble. The next few paragraphs should mention something about each piece you heard – either something you found interesting about the performance, or something about the piece. Perhaps the musicians or conductor said something about the piece, or you have a program with program notes. It is advisable to take notes during the concert. Finally, write a wrap up paragraph relating to the first one if possible. If you made some statements at the beginning, and then supported them in the middle of the article, tie them together at the end.

Do not spend a lot of time critiquing the performance. It is not expected that you identify a lot of subtle nuances in professional performances. If there is something really outstanding, by all means talk about it. If there is something really poor, you can mention it, but please do not denigrate the musicians. I am not looking for a critical review. Focus more on the way you would tell someone you know what went on at the concert, but with better sentence structure and grammar. Likewise, you do not need a lot of historical background to compare this performance to. If you have any experience with this kind of music, either hearing something like it before or performing it yourself, you certainly can do a comparison, but you do not absolutely have to.

Be sure to place the names of individual pieces in double quotes – “ ” – and the names of full-length works in italics. For example, “The Hallelujah Chorus” and “Sicut cervus” are correct. So are *The Messiah* and Vivaldi’s *Gloria*. Please also check grammar and spelling – some students let the spell-checker fix words, but it then changes them to different words without you noticing. Please proofread! Finally, for those of you just barely making the 300 words, you can only make type so large and space lines so far apart before it looks silly. Write more and format less!

Research Papers

The length of the paper should be 600 words – it is acceptable to use more if that is what it takes to fully explore the topic. For your reference, the first page of this document is 601 words long at 12-point font. Provide the following information at the beginning of the paper: your name, the date and the name of the composer or performer you are writing about.

The first paragraph should both introduce the topic of the paper and catch the reader’s interest. Please do not start with the sentence “This paper is about Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart” or anything resembling this sentence. Your opening paragraph should give a glimpse into what the supporting paragraphs are going to cover and be interesting enough to encourage the reader to continue. The body of the paper should contain information about the composer or performer. This can include interesting facts about their life, their music or their impact on other musicians both past and present. Simply recreating a historical timeline of a composer is boring and should be avoided. Try to say something interesting about the person; such as including the story of how as a boy, Franz Joseph Haydn cut the ponytail off the boy who sat in front of him in choir. The final paragraph should recap the highlights of the body, and bring the paper to a close. The final page should be a bibliography of all the sources used.

Some reports received in the past have contained serious factual errors. Please read your sources carefully and take notes. Be very careful with references found on the Internet, especially Wikipedia. Check your spelling and grammar. Some students have written sentences that were impossible to understand. Remember that if you write a good outline, you will write a better report. Not only will the material be better organized, but it will most likely stay more factual as well. The Internet, while extremely convenient, is also extremely unreliable as a source of factual information, and an open invitation for plagiarism. Try to use traditional sources as much as possible – you should have at least one print source to balance your Internet searches. The use of newspaper or magazine articles archived on the Internet is acceptable. The use of the New Grove Music Dictionary Online is considered a print source as well, and highly accurate and informative. I would highly recommend using this as one of your sources. Also, please make sure you have written your material in your own words. Plagiarism will not be tolerated, and will result in an automatic zero.

Solo Projects

Perform a solo in public or during class from memory. This solo will be held to the same standards as the IHSA solo and ensemble contestants are, and will be graded accordingly. To receive full points for this assignment, the performance must be outstanding, with words and notes nearly perfect. There must also be something else present in the performance that causes the listener to sit up and take notice. Acting and conveying the meaning of the text is a must. It is highly recommended that only those students studying private lessons select this assignment, since it is difficult to receive full points without help from a dedicated vocal coach. If you choose to participate in the IHSA solo and ensemble contest, then you may use your rating from this event as your grade for Semester 2, Quarter 1 (I-A, II-B, III-C, IV-D, etc.)