17 June 2011

'The Letter'

Your assignment today is to write an essay in the form of a letter addressed to the adult you will be five years from now. When you finish your letter, you will seal it into the envelope, address it, put your stamp on it, and turn in it. In the spring of the year 2016 I will mail the letter. No one will read the letter before it is mailed nor in the case it is returned.

Put a "Forever" stamp on the envelope and address it to yourself at the address where you can be most sure there will be someone who can get the letter to you. Do *not* put a return address on the envelope. I will need that space to add a return address when the letter is mailed. I will cover any increases in first-class mail between now and then.

To Write About

You may write anything you want, as long as you keep thinking and writing until five minutes remain in the period. You will seal the envelope at the end of this period. The letter is a private affair between you and the future you. Do not share it with others during class today. You may write about anything you think will interest the you you think you will be, but these are what former students have said they enjoyed reading about the most:

1. Your World Now

- your feelings about high school as you leave
- your values now—what matters to you and why
- your friends now—who matters to you and why
- your favorites now:
  - foods, clothes, styles, possessions
  - music, songs, TV shows, movies, art, books, plays
  - personalities, sports, teams, groups
  - school subjects, places on campus, school activities
  - your worries and concerns
- current politics—in South Pasadena, in the area, in California, in the United States, in the world
- current conditions and activities: What's going on in economy and business, science, the press, the arts…

2. The Future:

What are your predictions:

- for the world: What will conditions be like? What areas will have hostilities? economic or political changes? population or energy problems?
- for the nation: *Politics*: Who will be president? vice-president? governor? mayor? *Economics*: What will economic conditions be? How much will a new car or house cost? at what interest rate? *Technology*: What will have been invented? What products will have been improved? how?
- for the city and school: What changes will have occurred in South Pasadena? at the high school?

3. The Future You

- Where will you be living? What will your ties to South Pasadena be?
- What education will you have had? Where? How successful will you have been in school academically? socially? How happy will you be with your education?
- Will you be working? What jobs will you have had? How much will you be making? What further advances will you be looking forward to?
- What will you family situation be? Will you be married or single? Will you have children? What will your relationship be with your parents, brothers, and sisters?
- What will have been your biggest successes? What ambitions will you have fulfilled? Which will still lie before you? Which ambitions will you not have fulfilled?
- What will be important to you? Who will be important to you? What will your biggest problems be?

4. Conversation

Write down all the advice you can think of for the person you will be at about 23. What attitudes should your future self have? What might you forget over the next five years and need to be reminded of? Can you give your future self any advice about handling disappointment if all your dreams haven't come true? Tell your future self what you should be doing over the next ten years.

Time Left?

Include more information on the people most important to you as a senior. Who helped you? Whom would you like to get in touch with five years from now? Remind yourself.

Write yourself a short fill-in exam on life here during your high school career. Be sure to enclose an answer key; you might forget more than you expect to.