Dante's *Inferno*

Dante's *Divine Comedy* is an important work that is applicable even in today's literary, political and economic environments. Dante is one of the first great poets of our time; he was the first creative writer of our millennium who took a notable stand with regard to the current moral, religious and political issues of his day. He abhorred the widespread materialism, religious cynicism and political opportunism that disfigured his world. He was a writer of literature of protest: he does not descend to challenging tradition. His humility in the face of his positive message, which he felt to be greater than himself, was imposed by Providence to communicate

Assignment: You will be responsible for a Canto in Dante's *Inferno*. Critically read and analyze for the following stylistic, literary qualities:

1.   trace the movement of Dante through this level of Hell. Who does he meet? What does he learn? What "crimes" constitute this level? What is the historical/political/social/religious significance?
2.   analyze clarity of meaning by looking at organization, repetition of main ideas, syntax, and word choice.
3.   analyze Dante's philosophical assumptions and beliefs and discuss Dante's arguments and views/comments on life – use elements of the text to defend and clarify interpretations.
4.   analyze characteristics of poetry in your Canto (imagery, allegory, personification, simile, metaphor, tone, mood, irony, etc.)
5.   discuss the major themes and issues of the Medieval Era and how it is represented in your Canto.

Use secondary sources to bolster your research and understanding of the Canto. A useful website is http://www.tonykline.co.uk/PITBR/Italian/Danthome.htm. You will present/teach/analyze and discuss your Canto to the class.

CA Standards: Reading 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5; Literary Response & Analysis 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.6, 3.7; Literary Criticism 3.8, 3.9; Writing 1.3; Writing Applications 2.2; Speaking Applications 2.3

Rubric:

	1	2	3	4	5	Score
Dante's Journey (1)	Unable to trace journey. Misses key aspects of who he meets and what constitutes this level. No textual references or outside sources.	Traces journey, but only provides brief explanations of importance of level. No references or textual support	Traces journey vaguely with only 2 textual references. Provides limited analysis & discussion.	Traces journey w/ a few (4) specific textual references. Only uses 1 source. Begins to develop analysis and discussion.	Traces journey w/ several (6) specific references to text & outside sources.	
Thesis Statement / Introduction	Key word(s) near beginning of presentation	Clearly responding to prompt; having a thesis statement	Thesis statement does not include author and title	Thesis statement includes author and title, but is poorly worded	Thesis is clear and seeks agreement or action; unites audience behind a common belief or cause.	
Political/ Social/ Historical/ Religious analysis	Audience cannot discern the political/ historical/ social/ and religious significance of the work being presented	Audience has difficulty discerning the political/ historical/ social/ and religious significance of the work presented	Student shows a basic grasp of the political/ historical/ social/ and religious significance of the work	Demonstrates an understanding of the political/ historical/ social/ and religious significance of the work	Demonstrates a comprehensive grasp of the significant political/ historical/ social/ and religious ideas of the work.	
Subject Knowledge (elements of literature)	Student does not have a grasp of the information; cannot answer questions about the subject	Student does not demonstrate an awareness of the complexities within the text	Student is uncomfortable with information and is able to answer only simple questions	Student is at ease with expected answers to all questions, but fails to elaborate	Demonstrates awareness of author's use of stylistic devices and effects; complexities within text	
Graphics/ Visuals	Student uses no graphics or visuals	Student uses superfluous graphics (draws on whiteboard)	Student's graphics relate to text and presentation	Student's visuals are accurate and enhance presentation	Student uses quality electronic media to enhance presentation (video, .ppt)	
Eye contact	Student reads entire report with no eye contact	Student uses eye contact once or twice, but reads most the report	Student maintains eye contact some of the time, but frequently returns to notes	Student maintains eye contact most of the time, occasionally glances at notes	Student maintains eye contact with audience, glances at notes once or twice	
Elocution	Student mumbles, incorrectly pronounces terms, and speaks too quietly for students in the back of class to hear	Student's voice is low, incorrectly pronounces terms, audience has difficulty hearing presentation	Student's voice is low, pronounces most words correctly, audience can hear the presentation	Students uses a clear voice and correct, precise pronunciation of terms so that all members can hear the presentation	Student uses tone and elaborate diction effectively, precisely pronounces terms, and audience can clearly hear the presentation	
TOTAL						