

How to Make a CIDI Book:

The Authoritative Guide

The CIDI Book

(C.I.D.I. = Collection of Ideas for the Demonstration of Intelligence)

The purpose of this assignment: Good writing must be intelligent writing. It should say something memorable and significant. By collecting ideas from your reading, your learning, and your life's experiences, you can keep track of the thoughts and examples that will help you to demonstrate your intelligence when you are called upon to do so.

- 1) Purchase a bound book at an art store, bookstore, or hobby shop. (A spiral notebook is also acceptable, but it should be used only for the CIDI book and must stay together and look good all year.)
- 2) Create 5 sections using index tabs. Label the index tabs, creating the following sections:
 - A. Quotes
 - B. Literature
 - C. History
 - D. Popular Culture/Current Events
 - E. Personal Experience
- 3) Every week, add a new entry to your CIDI book. Each entry should be at least half a page long (approx. 200 words, minimum). Use the attached model pages as a guide for your entries. After each entry, write a sentence saying how the paragraph you wrote might be used in a longer essay. Then, write a second sentence stating what the broader issue is to which this paragraph relates. (This is the “so what” which often makes up a paper's conclusion.) Every few weeks, your new entries will be checked and marked with the date. Also on that day, students will share an entry from their CIDI books as an oral presentation.
- 4) At the end of the quarter and/or semester, you will turn it in for a major project grade. Here are the standards I will use to grade your book:

Completeness: The book should contain a minimum of _____ entries, each at least 150-200 words long and focusing on one main idea.

Variety: By the end of each quarter, the CIDI book should have at least one response in each section of the book. By the end of the semester, the student should have a minimum of two entries in each section—(10 points)

Substance (Depth of Thought): The entries in each section should demonstrate the ability of the writer to reflect intelligently on the ideas chosen. Each entry should be completed as though this paragraph might be used on a college entrance exam, and proper credit should be given to the authors, books, movies, etc. to which the writer is responding. Do NOT treat this assignment as a journal, as an opportunity to complain about work you have to do, or as a chance to record the most recent wins of your favorite sports team. Show off your intelligence and insight.—(35 points)

Legibility and Readability—The writing should be word-processed or handwritten with **great** care.—(10 points)

Artful and Neat, Personalized Appearance in a Beautiful Book—(5 points)

Quotable Quotes

The only normal people are the ones you don't know very well.
--Joe Ancis

The unexamined life is not worth living. --Socrates

A man with few friends is only half-developed; there are whole sides of his nature which are locked up and have never been expressed. He cannot unlock them himself, he cannot even discover them; friends alone can stimulate him and open him.
--Randolph Bourne

The man who cannot believe in himself cannot believe in anything else.
--Roy L. Smith

The confidence which we have in ourselves gives birth to that which we have in others.
--Francois de La Rochefoucauld

...delusions are always more alluring than facts. Clarence Darrow

There is no such thing as absolute certainty, but there is assurance sufficient for the purposes of human life."
--John Stewart Mill

If you would be loved, love and be lovable.
--Benjamin Franklin

The tragedy of life doesn't lie in not reaching your goal. The tragedy lies in having no goal to reach.
--Benjamin Mays

The poor man is not he who is without a cent, but he who is without a dream.
--Harry Kemp

There are three ingredients in the good life: learning, earning and yearning.
--Christopher Morely

This is true joy of life—the being used for a purpose that is recognized by yourself as a right one, instead of being a feverish, selfish little clod of ailments and grievances, complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy.
--George Bernard Shaw

Eighty percent of success is showing up.
--Woody Allen

This one makes a net, this one stands and wishes.
Would you like to make a bet which one gets the fishes?
--Chinese rhyme

Quotation Response

Advice for this section:

- Pick your quotes carefully. Look especially for quotations that best express your beliefs about life, good friends, leadership, and important values. These are the quotes you will draw on most often in your writing. By the end of the semester, you should know at least three of these quotes by heart.
- Feel free to copy your favorite quotes into your CIDI book and then to write your response at a later time. Also, feel free to include quotes to which you never end up writing a response.
- If you're looking for good quotes, try the quotation cites our librarians have found for you. Go to the Prospect High School library page listing school projects. Just click on "Buczinsky—Quotations." If you still come up short, use Google to run a search for your own quotation sites, or consider buying a collection of great quotations from your local bookstore.

Example of a CIDI response to a quotation:

"Man is the only animal that laughs and weeps, for he is the only animal that is struck with the difference between what things are and what they ought to be."

-William Hazlitt

Essentially Hazlitt is saying in this argument that humanity has in one hand a vital ability that sets us apart from the pure instincts of animals, and in the other somewhat of a curse, however lightly that term may be used. The latter is true because if Hazlitt's inference is to be believed, it is not necessarily better to have the capacity of mind that we are able to use at our whim. However, I think that this concept goes much further than what is presented—from Hazlitt's statement, one must question whether our advancements in our perceptions of the world are actually broadening these perceptions or whether they are simply over-complicating things. This may seem a bit improbable, but at the same time so did the notion of people polluting their environment to such a level as today, but we are now stuck with the harmful fruits of that generation's advancements. Personally, I believe that there is a medium to which people should strive. Destroying the environment is obviously one extreme, and common sense tells us that going back to living in caves and returning to a hunter-gatherer lifestyle is just as intrusive. Instead, we should learn to reduce those advancements that lead to ill effects and truly learn what they ought to be.

How I could use this in an essay:

- I could use this in an essay in which I must talk about William Hazlitt.
- I could also use this in an essay about how we should work to improve our environment.

The "so-what"

- If we want to truly live up to our potential, we must fix what we've caused and prevent it from happening again.

Literature Response

Advice for this section:

—When you find a passage or a poem to which you want to respond, type it up (or photocopy it) and paste it on one side of your CIDI book so that you don't forget about it. You can always write up your response at a later time. Also, it's nice to have the complete passage to refer to because you probably don't want to quote the entire thing when you write your response.

Example of a CIDI response to a passage from literature:

“I am mad at my dad. And I am *mad* at my dad. Why is that so hard to see, Tibby? I have no problem being mad at you.”

—Carmen Lowell in *The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants*

This quote really caught my attention when I was reading this wonderful novel. At first, I really didn't understand what Carmen meant when she said this, but I wrote it down and reminded myself to take a look at it again later. When I re-analyzed the scenario I understood what the meaning behind this statement was.

Carmen lives with her Puerto Rican mother. Carmen inherited her mother's dark hair, dark skin, and robust body figure instead of her father's Caucasian appearance. Her parents divorced when she was about nine years old. Carmen would visit her dad during the summer but live with her mom during the school year. At this point in the story, Carmen is very angry with her dad because he got engaged to a different woman with two children of her own. What Carmen is really angry about is that he didn't tell Carmen ahead of time that there was another woman in his life. When Carmen went to see him one summer, she expected fun-filled days spent with just the two of them. Instead she was faced with the wedding preparations and a “perfect” step-mother and step-sister.

This quote says much about how friends can make a bigger influence on you than parents. Carmen and Tibby have been friends since they were little babies, but Carmen has only known her dad for the summers after she turned nine. Carmen doesn't mind being mad at Tibby because she knows that no matter what happens, they will be friends forever. Carmen doesn't feel the same about her father because she feels that he may forget about her with his new family in his life. Carmen can't believe that she is mad at her dad while she thinks there is a possibility of losing him.

This is probably why children argue with their parents. No matter how much we scream, kick, yell, cry, or argue, we know that our parents will always love us. We know that we have nothing to lose because they will always be there for us when we need help, support, and guidance. This quote has a deep message. It shows that the people who really love us may see us at our worst and will always care for us.

How I could use this in an essay:

- This would be a wonderful essay on friendship
- This would work well in an essay about people who have been influences on us.
- This would be great in an essay about parent/child relationships.

The “so what”

—This idea shows me that companionship with other people can be stronger with some than with others, even if that means being closer to friends than to family members.

History Response

Advice for this section:

- If you don't feel inspired by what you're learning in your history or social studies class at school, watch the history channel or rent a documentary about some time period that interests you.
- Think especially about people who demonstrate heroism, or amazing ingenuity, or incredible compassion. **Know the names of these people. They make impressive examples for your writing!!!**

Example of CIDI response to a significant event in history:

This year marks the first in four in which February has 29 days instead of the usual 28. What may well be known is that this rather odd appearance of an extra day in fact helps to regulate our calendar so the seasons over time don't slowly shift from their actual time frames. However, what may be more elusive to most is why we even need such a measure. This happens because a year is actually slightly *more* than 365 days, being about 365.242374 days long. Thus, adding a day every four years makes the years come out to an average of 365.25 days long. However, this still doesn't equal the actual length of a year, and so years divisible by 100 aren't leap years, unless, of course, they are divisible by 400, in which case they are. Ultimately, the years then average out at 365.2425 days. Again, though this *still* isn't equivalent to the actual length of a year, with a difference of 0.000125 days. Therefore, it has been suggested that every year not divisible by 8,000 not be leap years. However, by that time, the length of a year will have increased by an undeterminable amount, so there really is no practical point in doing this, as by this time a new definition of the word "year" will have been created.

All of this appears amazing when considering that the first intercalary, or "leaping," calendar was introduced by Julius Caesar in 45 BC. Prior to this time, the Roman calendar used by the same civilization included a leap month that effectively shifted the calendar out of cycle with the moons. To me, it is hard to believe that a population more than 2,000 years ago simply realized that our day length was not accurate, let alone calculated the difference and found a solution to the problem. If such a feat could be accomplished, it makes one wonder a few things. For one, we must ponder how people in the future will view our discoveries. Will it be with amazement, as I have done here? Or will it be with pity, as we do not live up to our potential? Furthermore, we must question our own capacities for discovery and push ourselves to solving those dilemmas that constantly confound and elude us, lest we be left behind in the collective history of our society.

How I could use this in an essay

- I could use this in an essay about leap years.
- I could also use this in an essay in which I must talk about the mark think our society will leave on the future.

The "so what"

- We must push our intrigue to question things that have eluded us in the past, or we will not live to our full potential.

Popular Culture/Current Event Response

Advice for this section:

- Consider interesting stories you read about in the newspaper or magazines.
- Think of scenes and movies that made you think deeply about some subject or other.
- Consider stories, interviews or song lyrics that you may have heard over the radio. Think especially about stories or lyrics that seemed to demonstrate real wisdom.
- Think about moments in television shows that affected you deeply. Be careful to think of moments that you believe demonstrated real wisdom, not just moments that made you laugh or cry.

Example of CIDI response to a significant event in popular culture:

In what seems an obnoxious quest to find CIDI book topics, they sometimes come to me at the oddest times, like this particular one. As I looked up “Mary Jane’s Last Dance” by Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers, I found a video of an armless man such a song-with his toes—all the while singing the lyrics. His name is Mark Goffeney. I sat there wondering how he manages to tune his guitar, when I realized how much of an inspiration this man is to anyone who has had to overcome obstacles. Personally, I cannot think of a much worse physical condition that still leaves one a functioning human being, so for this man to be able to do something that many people cannot do for the life of them, is simply amazing. Now, whenever I can’t get something, I just think about how much harder it would be without arms, and it makes me work all the more at whatever I am doing. Another thing that really got me happened in the video when no one stopped to even acknowledge his talent. In our society today people stop for the stupidest reasons, be it a car crash, a cop pulling over someone, or even a dysfunctional family. But when someone obviously has a special talent, people are too busy to stop and enjoy his musical feat. Overall, people with extraordinary abilities should be looked upon to give their time in the spotlight.

How I could use this in an essay:

- I could use this in an essay describing people I see as role models.
- I could also use this in an essay in which I must say how I think people could improve mannerisms.

The “so what”

People with great talents should be looked up to and respected, not ignored.

Personal Experience Response

—Listen to the stories your friends and family members tell. Write a response to those stories that illustrates something you find important in life.

—If you can't remember the details of a friend's story, give the friend a call!

Example of a CIDI personal experiences that illustrates something significant about life: (This example is about three times as long as yours needs to be, but feel free to get carried away with your story if the spirit moves you.)

On February 14, 2008, at about 3 o'clock p.m., I was riding the bus home from Prospect listening to music, and not really thinking about anything in particular. On this same day, at approximately the same time, my brother Jonathan was sitting in his class at Northern Illinois University. Just across the path, in the building only feet away from where Jonathan was, a gunman opened fire on Cole Lecture Hall, which was filled with over 100 students. This gunman killed five students and injured sixteen others before turning the gun on himself. This gunman was a recent graduate from NIU and came back to the campus to commit an unspeakable crime. When I arrive home and heard about the incident, I was in a state of shock and fear. I simply wanted to make sure that my brother was all right. When my dad finally reached him, he found out that Jonathan was safe and okay. Just this same week there were killings at Louisiana Technical College, a shooting at a high school in Memphis, Tennessee, another in Oxnard, California, and in another at a junior high school. I didn't think much of these killings simply because I knew nobody that attended these campuses, but it really hit home when I heard about NIU. The rest of the day I was asking myself, "What if the gunman entered Jonathan's classroom?" and, "What if Jonathan got hurt?" I had visited the campus a few months ago and it felt like it was a very laidback and relaxed campus. I even began thinking seriously about attending school here after high school.

Jonathan called us again that afternoon. I quickly picked up and said hello. He asked me in a state of complete ease if I know what ingredients are needed to make guacamole. "Uhh, avocados, cilantro, salt, peppers, tomatoes, *Jonathan are you sure you're safe?*" I asked him frantically. "Yeah, I'm at Jewel, relax." After a few silent moments he said, "I'm a little shaken up but it's okay. It's really unfortunate."

It seems like people don't realize the seriousness of a situation unless it affects them directly. Would you argue with your mother if you knew that she was going to be in a serious car crash the next day? What would you do if you knew that your brother wasn't going to make it to next week? I think that this experience has helped me realize that anything can happen in the blink of an eye, and I will definitely appreciate my family and friends more because of this tragedy.

How I could use this in an essay:

- I could use this in an essay about a scare that I had personally.
- I could use this in an essay about college shootings.

The "so what"

The main idea of this essay is to be grateful for people that I hold close to my heart.