ALWAYS RUNNING: Excerpt Analysis Essay

On a separate sheet, please **respond to ONE of the prompts.** For each prompt, there is an excerpt from the novel that will provide specific examples; these excerpts should be referenced in your response.

Responses should be five paragraphs in length, and should include evidence from the book to support your answer. Include a **strong, direct main argument (thesis)** at the end of the first paragraph. In each body paragraph, **use at least two specific examples (evidence)** from the excerpts provided, and be sure to **explain/connect each example clearly (commentary)**. You are expected to use specific quotations; paraphrase ONLY if necessary.

**Respond to ONE of the following prompts:**

**Prompt 1: The Language Barrier and the American Dream**

From the start of the novel, we see that Luis and his family struggle to integrate positively into their neighborhood because of various barriers presented by their race and class. Like many migrant families, Luis and his family come to America in order to find stable work and a stable lifestyle. How available, or unavailable, is this American dream to Luis and his family? Base your argument on evidence from the novel.

**Prompt 2: Peer Pressure or Easy Target**

At many times throughout the novel, we see that when Luis is isolated and ignored, and it sets him up to become even more involved in gang violence. In Ch. 5, after he has been kicked out of the house and into the garage, we get a clear example of how this isolation not only works against him, but against his family also. In what ways is Luis affected negatively by this isolation from his family? How is it that Luis’s family, and the families of those involved in gangs, get negatively affected as well? Why does Rodriguez draw our attention to this? Explain and discuss the variety of consequences and stresses expressed by Rodriguez in this excerpt.

**Prompt 3: Hands Up, Don’t Shoot**

Rodriguez starts to illustrate the ways in which LAPD officers abuse their power very clearly in Ch. 3. He even goes so far as to call them “just another gang.” The police never seem to do anything overtly illegal to Luis and the other members of the South San Gabriel gangs, but they do work in ways to set traps to get the boys arrested. Evaluate how Rodriguez shows these traps to be unfair and unjustifiable, despite the fact that the boys from these gangs are committing crimes.

**Prompt 4: Getting Out For Good**

Luis is finally able to fully detach himself from Las Lomas and gang life in general, but only after several years and several miles of distance. What events, influences, and people helped Luis finally disconnect himself from the violent lifestyle he knew as a young man? Which of these positive influences on Luis were the greatest, and why? Use specific examples and instances from the book to make your argument.

|Outline| **Prompt: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Introduction Paragraph:

Thesis:

Body Paragraph 1 (Reason #1)

Topic Sentence:

**Evidence – Examples - Details**

Body Paragraph 2 (Reason #2)

Topic Sentence:

[Body Paragraph 3 (Reason #3)]

[Topic Sentence:]

Conclusion: *Present a new, relevant idea that you have not explored*  
 *Restate the thesis in a new way*  
 *Discuss any additional evidence or commentary you could not find a place for in the essay*

|Rubric| **Your essay will be scored using the following rubric:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Student** | **Always Running: Essay Response** English 12 :: P2/4 :: Stoll |
| *Your essay should have included the following components; any missing components have been bolded* | |
| **Form: *(Essay utilizes…)*** | **Content: *(Essay includes…)*** |
| * Clear, debatable topic sentences mindful of structure/diction | * A strong, direct main argument that fully answers the prompt |
| * Effectively integrated quotations | * 3 pieces of relevant evidence |
| * Meaningful organization of paragraphs | * Precise transitions between evidence |
| * Blended and balanced commentary | * Unique commentary that expands  upon the main argument |
|  |  |