

# The **RUNLAW** Method

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## **FOREWORD**

When it comes to the issue of essay writing, and more specifically, the teaching of essay writing, there is no shortage of information for the searching student or teacher. It usually goes something like this: read the prompt, organize your ideas, write. This is basic sound advice, but I realized early in my teaching career that it wasn't enough. Kids need more, and because we often assume they already know what to do when they reach the upper grades, they generally don't get it. The reality is, most kids don't prepare before they write, and it's because they don't know how. The RUNLAW Method was designed to remedy this situation.

RUNLAW is a simple system designed to help writers analyze and outline essay questions for the purpose of creating a detailed writing plan. It teaches them how to outline effectively, how to gather, analyze, and order information - fundamental skills essential to all the content areas - and ensures a blueprint built from the essay prompt itself. RUNLAW trains writers to really learn how to read essay questions and to focus on the key elements of the prompt when planning an essay.

RUNLAW is a practical system. It gives teachers an effective way to communicate with their students and with each other about the fundamentals of essay writing. Its simple steps can be implemented quickly in a single classroom or across an entire site helping to create common language and teaching tools for the challenging business of writing instruction.

RUNLAW is both easy to teach and easy to learn. Each letter in the acronym represents an important step in the process. The steps are as follows:

- R**ead the prompt
- U**nderline the writing tasks
- N**umber the writing tasks
- L**ist the writing tasks in order
- A**dd details/Arrange
- W**rite

Steps R-L represent the organization stage where writer engages prompt and determines exactly what the essay response will require. By the completion of step L, the framework for the essay's outline has been created. Creation begins with step A where the writer adds details to the project outline and arranges them to best suit the essay's purpose. Writing begins after the completion of step A.

That's it. Take the prompt, transform it into a writing plan, and use the writing plan to write the essay. Does an effective writing plan guarantee a good piece of writing? Of course not, we all know good writing happens over time and with lots of practice. But RUNLAW does ensure an important preliminary step and gives teachers and kids a useful tool to begin the process.

RUNLAW is so simple and effective I believe there is value in its barest form outlined above. For those interested in interested in the A to Z of implementation, please consider the full program where you will find a detailed teaching guide including step by step instructions for each day's objectives and all resources necessary for implementation of the system.

Each purchase includes the following:

- ✓ Teaching guide/implementation timeline
- ✓ Sample essay prompts
- ✓ Helpful tips for effective implementation
- ✓ Email support

The RUNLAW Method was created by a regular classroom teacher and is used by public and private school teachers, in remedial and regular programs, in home schools, and in a college introduction to academic writing course. It is easy to learn, easy to teach, and it works. Please consider the RUNLAW Method for your essay writing preparation needs.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Stavropoulos', with a stylized flourish at the end.

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## OVERVIEW: THE RUNLAW METHOD

Essays. The cruel step-sisters of the writing world. Teachers avoid them, students dread them. They may not be glamorous, but they are essential and they are certainly here to stay. And because essay writing is the primary tool used to evaluate writing at every level of education, it is an academic survival skill that every student must develop to competence.

The question then, is not should kids write better essays, but how. The answer, I believe, begins with careful preparation and lies within the essay prompt itself. The form has a lot going for it—especially for inexperienced writers new to the process. Its architecture is comprehensible: an essay prompt is simply a set of writing directions, or tasks, as we'll refer to them from now on. Writers are judged on how well and how completely they address these tasks in their essay response.

The RUNLAW Method involves six simple steps that train writers to analyze, understand, and outline essay questions. Writers analyze essay questions across genre types and identify the writing tasks contained therein. These writing tasks are then organized into simple outlines to which details are later added. When the writing plan is complete, writing begins. This preparation is done with every essay question and before any writing occurs. An important aim of RUNLAW is to so embed this process in the experience of the writer, that planning becomes an essential part of the writing routine.

The fundamental goal of The RUNLAW Method is to give each writer a set of basic tools that can be used in any essay writing situation, tools that can be brought to bear no matter what the genre, topic, or purpose.

Each lesson, or lesson block (a single lesson that may span several sessions) has three basic parts: Goals, Materials, and Homework. A lesson's Goals establish objectives for the session. The Materials section lists all resources necessary for delivery of the lesson: handouts, materials, and teaching notes (found in the Appendix in the order of their use: A1-A20). Homework is assigned when outside practice is required for mastery of a specific lesson's Goals.

Class \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Period \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Row/Seat # \_\_\_\_\_

### RUNLAW

Over the last couple of weeks, we've discussed the importance of the Bill of Rights to our nation and to our form of government. Which of the ten do you think is most important? In other words which is the one, that if we were to strike it from the Constitution, would most profoundly change the way we have learned to live? Name the right and explain what it protects or guarantees. Finally, discuss how our lives would be different if it were to disappear.

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Class \_\_\_\_\_

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### RUNLAW

You just finished reading an interesting new book. Write a review that will help your classmates decide whether or not they would like to read it. Include the title and author, a description of the setting and main characters, and a short summary of the action (plot). Share a memorable scene from the book that will clearly show why you liked or didn't like this book. Conclude with a rating of your choosing.

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### RUNLAW

We have spent the last couple of weeks exploring the basics of geology. We've read all about rocks, examined and sorted the different types based on their essential characteristics. What is the *rock cycle*? Explain the process by focusing on the three main types of rock and how they are related. Give a specific example of each by making note of its main characteristics and conclude your paper with your thoughts about why it is important to study them - they are only rocks, after all.

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Class \_\_\_\_\_

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### RUNLAW

What happens to Jonas and Gabriel at the end of *The Giver*? Describe the actual sled ride down into Elsewhere. Tell what happens when the sled comes to a stop. Where are they? Is there life in Elsewhere? Write chapter 24 of *The Giver*. How does it end?

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Class \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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### RUNLAW

Historians argue about how many levels there were in Japan's feudal system - it's something historians like to do. Some say six, some say five, some four. In your view, how many levels were there? Outline each one briefly and explain its role in Japanese culture. Was this feudal system necessary in medieval Japan? Why or why not? Include at least two pieces of evidence from your reading to support your conclusion.

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