Creative Writing Assignment:
Letter to Your Younger Self

This week’s assignment is inspired by the book, What I Know Now: Letters to My Younger Self, edited by Ellyn Spragins. In it, several women write letters to themselves at a younger age and offer advice about life. Your assignment this week is to write a letter to yourself as a younger person—perhaps as a youngster starting middle school; perhaps as a freshman entering high school; perhaps as a young person on the brink of some other major life transition. Like in memoir writing, this task involves writing about the past with the knowledge of the present.

Our letters will be written using standard business letter format. However, while true business writing would use a formal, professional voice, this letter should be written in an informal and authentic tone (because, after all, you’re writing to yourself). It is important that you use your own true voice; your letter should sound uniquely like you.

To help prepare you for real-life writing, each letter should include an envelope with the sender’s and recipient’s addresses typed and formatted appropriately.

Prewriting Strategies:
• Think about yourself at a particular age... 8, 10, 12, 14, 16... Then think about how you have changed and grown since that age. What would you do differently? What would you change if you had the chance?
• Think about the tone of voice you use and the compassion you have for others who are struggling with a major decision or life transition. Consider adopting this tone as you write to yourself as a younger person; be generous to yourself. Speak to yourself as a caring adult giving advice to a child.
• Consider the life lessons you’ve learned that resonate with other people. The reason Ellyn Spragins’ book is so compelling is because the stories in it are easy to relate to; even if you haven’t been in the same exact situation as Vanna White, chances are you can still relate to being in a situation that compromises your morals and values.

Key Writing Skills:
Reflective writing
Mastering business letter format
SAMPLE BUSINESS LETTER FORMAT

February 1, 2025

Sender’s name
Sender’s address
City, State ZIP

Recipient’s name
Recipient’s address
City, State ZIP

Dear Name:

Letter opening; first paragraph here.

Second paragraph.

Final paragraph.

Closing,

Sender’s name
Title
*Letter to your Younger Self* Paper Evaluation

**Clear introduction of the event or moment**
- Situation (who, what, where, when) is made clear
- Opening is engaging

**Clear focus on the event or moment**
- Focus is narrow and clear
- Writing does not wander or share irrelevant back story

**Voice**
- Writing shows in-depth thinking about this particular moment
- Author shows knowledge of how the moment was significant in some way
- Voice is appropriate; shows compassion for the younger self
- Message is one that others can relate to; it resonates with readers

**Final draft quality**
- Author has taken care to polish paper in areas of punctuation, spelling, grammar, paragraphing, etc.
- Letter and envelope demonstrate knowledge of business writing format

___ / 40 Total

**Tips:**
1. Be kind to yourself! Don’t berate yourself for past mistakes.
2. No talk of time travel. This is distracting and takes away from the power of your letter.
3. Zoom in on one moment or situation. Avoid the temptation to discuss multiple problems/situations.
4. Include advice that would benefit readers. (It may be difficult to do this without sounding cliché, but try!)
5. Write your letter on your own original letterhead. You might have to do this for something outside of school someday, so give it a shot now!