In the twelve weeks of the second trimester I have improved in a variety of ways. The first thing that I noticed from first trimester to second was that my free response essays have improved. Looking through my first free response essay I realized that I had not put enough detail into the essay to thoroughly answer the prompt. Through the free response essays I have learned how to write in a less formal style, and to be able to give details about the book without going into a plot summary. I found throughout the second trimester that I was able to better answer the prompt that I chose because we got to chose the books for our Independent Reading projects. Another thing I noticed improvement from first trimester in is my ability to make my presentations more appealing to the audience. The project that really helped me with this was the Pecha Kucha presentation because we could only have so many slides, and the slides could have very little text. With the limit on text I was better able to pick images that would create a power visual for my audience.

Throughout my high school career I have taken a lot of AP classes because I enjoy the increased effort needed. In the second trimester I enjoyed the King Lear project because I was with a group that worked together like a fine run machine. Each group member contributed on all aspects of the project whether that be the paper, presentation, or proposal. Within my group I was the member who would gather up our outside materials and look through them for quotes or pieces that would work with our critical theory of feminist/gender theory. The project that I enjoyed the most was the Pecha Kucha project because it was a presentation style that I had never done before. In the Pecha Kucha we had to have three outside sources which left me wondering what I should use given my theme of unchecked ambition. I decided that instead of just looking at books I would expand my sources to include non-fictional events. When I did that I found it was much easier to make connections between my two books, and a historical example and modern example. Overall, I would say I worked hard on my Pecha Kucha because I thoroughly enjoyed the topic that I was studying.

In this trimester I found I had done more intellectual risk taking than I did in the first trimester. The thing that encouraged me to take more risks was all the different variety of projects that we did. For example, in my This I Believe project I shared a story that is very personal to my family and I. The story that I chose is not something I usually share with people because of the more personal nature of it. When we were first told about the Pecha Kucha presentation I was a bit nervous because I have always had a small amount of speech anxiety, and the idea of each slide being on a time limit scared me at first. As the presentation went along I found I was more eager to present my final project because I had made very strong connections between my two books, and the non-fictional outside sources that I used. My last example of intellectual risk taking would have to have been in the mini lesson we did about building and argument and online privacy. As a undecided member I had the courage to ask both groups a challenging question that would get them thinking.

When I look back to first trimester I see great improvement in myself as a reader, writer and critical thinker. As a reader I have improved in my ability to understand how to books connect even through there theme may differ slightly. I have also observed that as a reader I am able to see those slight differences in the text, and make connections to them despite the differences. With my improved ability to see small differences I noticed in the Pecha Kucha project I was able to tie in non-fictional events with fictional stories, and was able to rely those to my audience. As a writer I would say the biggest improvement is in my ability to write in a more informal style which was originally something that I struggled with. The biggest thing that helped me with the more informal style was the free response essays and the poetry essays. As a critical thinker I would say the biggest difference I noticed was my ability to connect fictional books to non-fictional events and present to my audience the underlying theme running through each. Both the King Lear project and the Pecha Kucha helped with this in that we had to use outside sources for each, and for our King Lear project we chose primarily non-fictional texts.