

## Directed Self Placement Essay Prompt, 2011

**Write a 3-5 page, double-spaced essay (750-900 words) in response to the following prompt:**

In “Mind vs. Machine,” Brian Christian surveys several perspectives on what it means to be human. For instance, at one point he writes that “being human (and being oneself) is about more than simply showing up,” and at another that the ability to be “zany, a jokester, [is] a much more ‘human’ personality type.” Read the article carefully, and pay close attention to the many perspectives it presents on what it means to be human. Then, select one of these perspectives and — drawing on evidence from the article, as well as your own experience and/or other texts you have read — take a position on it. Do you agree with it or not, and why? How does other evidence from the article complicate your position?

In asking you to write an academic, evidence-based essay, we are asking you to develop a clear position and to support that position using evidence. Therefore, we suggest that you keep the following guidelines in mind.

- **Focus:** Your essay should be developed around a clear central thesis or argument, integrating your own views with material from the article.
- **Structure:** Your essay should be clearly organized in a way that elaborates on and supports your central thesis. Individual paragraphs should be cohesive, and your reader should be able to follow the logical progression of your ideas from one paragraph to the next.
- **Evidence/Analysis:** Make sure that you support your claims with well-chosen examples from the article and your own experience, and that you explain clearly how these examples support your points.

Christian, Brian. “Mind vs. Machine.” *The Atlantic*. March 2011.