Tuesday’s classwork:

Questions to accompany the Wall Street Journal article titled “Parsing the Weightiness of Words.”

George Orwell, in his essay “Politics and the English Language,” complains about certain elements of poor writing. In the Wall Street Journal article I gave you to read in class we read that H.W. Fowler had many of the same complaints. Look through the article and find at least one complaint, expressly stated, that Orwell and Fowler had in common.

List a few rules of English grammar or usage that you are unfamiliar with or know are weak points in your own writing. Think, as an example, what I told you about reflexive and intensive pronouns (“myself,” for example). Most of you were unfamiliar with those terms, and as such didn’t know when to properly use them.

Define “Utopia.” Then, look to see how it is used in the article.

The sentence in the second paragraph beginning “Fowler was magisterial” is a particularly good sentence for several reasons. List some elements of that sentence which highlight what is good about it.

Write a sentence ending in a preposition.

Write a sentence containing a split infinitive.

Contrast the definitions of “forceful” and “forcible.”

When Fowler writes about the word “hair-do” that it “deserves to supersede the alien coiffure and to be written hairdo,” what does he mean by “alien coiffure”?

Read the paragraph detailing “Elegant Variation.” While the paragraph does define the term for you, create your own definition based on the explanation and examples given. Don’t just copy the definition in the sentence itself.

Using context clues only – not dictionary! – define “fastidious.” It appears twice in this paragraph.

Find the word “allowed” in this paragraph. Note that previously the author had highlighted this exact word in paragraph six as an example of “Elegant Variation.” Why, then, do you think the author chose to use this word here? State your opinion and explain why.