**The Memorandum** by Vaclav Havel

World Cultures Writing Assignment

**Directions:**
1. Attend a showing of the play. Stay for both acts.
2. Read the script. It is available on electronic reserve through the library.
3. Select a question below and write a 3-5 page paper.

**Resources:**
*Visual History* “Czechoslovakia and the Czech and Slovak Republics” p. 578

“Havel at Columbia” http://havel.columbia.edu
“The Playwright President” http://www.nysun.com/article/42028
“A Word About Words”

**Discussion Questions:**

1. Read Vaclav Havel’s essay, “A Word About Words.” It is available on his official website, click on “Before 1989,” you will see a list of essays and writings. This is his acceptance speech for the Peace Prize of the German Booksellers Association. In this essay Havel discusses the power of words: ways they can be used and misused. How do you see the ideas he discusses in this article portrayed in *The Memorandum*? In writing on this topic, you might find it useful to refer back to the Senocak articles.

2. Read about Havel’s biography and the recent history of Czechoslovakia. There are useful resources in your *Visual History* text, and on the “Havel at Columbia” and “Vaclav Havel: Official Website” sites. How does *The Memorandum* fit in Havel’s life and the history of his country? In what ways is it a social commentary?
Writing Guidelines:

Papers must be 3-5 pages long. Papers must be typed or word processed using a 12-point serif font such as “Times,” double-spaced, and with 1-inch margins. Be sure to check the default settings on your word processor as many of them are set to a wider margin. Please number your pages and staple them together before turning them in.

It is important that you distinguish between your original thoughts and the thoughts of others in your writing. When quoting, paraphrasing, or otherwise using someone else’s ideas use citations in a formal format such as Chicago or APA. I prefer not to read MLA citations.

Before you print out your paper use a spell-check. Re-read what you wrote. Make corrections. Spell-check again. Double check the assignment. Ask someone else to proof-read your work. Did I mention that you should spell-check?

The writing center is available to help with proof reading and revision. The can also help you with source citation. Be sure to take this assignment sheet with you.

Points may be deducted from papers that do not meet these very basic standards.

Grading:

Papers will be graded on a 100 point scale. 30 points will be based on mechanics: spelling, grammar, length, citation of sources, and so forth. 70 points will be based on content: how well did you address the assigned question, do you demonstrate an understanding of the material, were you able to incorporate appropriate ideas from the assigned sources, and so forth.

Extra credit may be granted for students who demonstrate exceptional understanding, and incorporate sources beyond those assigned.

Savage Chickens by Doug Savage

by Doug Savage

www.savagechickens.com