

Assignments

Grammar

- **Write** a reflective essay of at least 500 words periodically as assigned by me. Essays will be in response to prompts based on common college application topics. Essays should be original with a clear and unifying idea. They should be typed, using MLA format.

Literature

- Fill out an assignments sheet each unit for selections read (provided by me). Rate yourself on well you read. Assignment sheet and reading journal are due on the day of the test for that unit.
- For each unit of literature, choose one work (poem, story, etc) and write a page-long response essay. Be sure to get analytical—cover the main themes, characters, conflicts, and resolutions dealt with in the work. The essay is due the day after the test for that unit.

	Vocabulary	Extra
First Quarter	Take quiz over Latin prefix meanings (p. 50)	Write an original short story, using realistic characters and settings, with real-life conflict. Must be 800-1,000 words. Be sure to include the six elements of a good story. Due Dec. 10th by end of day
Second Quarter	The quiz over Greek prefix meanings (pp. 50-51)	
Third Quarter	The quiz over Latin root meanings (p. 51)	Read <i>Julius Caesar</i> and write a 3-page paper discussing several topics given later. Due March 11th by end of day.
Fourth Quarter	Take quiz over “Combining Forms and Misc. Suffixes” (pp. 51-52)	Choose classic British novel to read (must be approved by me). Write book critique. Due May 7th by end of day

- **Six elements necessary for a good short story:**
 - **Setting:** create a *specific* time, place, and way of life
 - **Character:** create at least one real-life character (refer to Ch. 2)
 - **Plot:** be mindful of the sequence of events
 - **Conflict:** a story with no central conflict is a story not worth reading
 - **Point of View:** choose a perspective and be consistent
 - **Theme:** why are you writing?

How to Write a Response to Literature Essay

By Soheila Battaglia

In most English courses you will be required to read literature -- and then you will have to write about it. In order to successfully write an essay in response to a text, you must have a clear point, and you must read and analyze the characters, themes and language for support and evidence.

Thesis Statement

While you should evaluate various elements of a literary text to write an essay, you ultimately need to be making a single point. Your point can address the story's themes, the author's intentions, the relationship between the text and the world today or specific aspects of the story, play or poem. This point is encapsulated in a single sentence, in the form of a thesis statement, and included in the introductory paragraph of the essay. The function of the rest of the essay is to explain and prove this statement.

Characters

In the case of fiction and drama, the role of characters is a key source of information. You can reflect on how the characters change throughout the text, what important decisions they make and how their decisions reveal their values. You can also address the conflicts they face -- within themselves, with other people and with forces such as nature or God. For example, in an essay on Kate Chopin's novel "The Awakening," you could write about the protagonist's conflict with Victorian society and the limitations placed on women.

Themes

Theme must be addressed in all literary essays. It can [be] expressed in literature in various ways, usually implicitly, and can be identified through inference and interpretation. For example, you may be given a specific theme such as "loss of innocence," and asked to compare how the theme is manifested in two different texts. Or you may be asked to identify major themes in Langston Hughes' poetry. Make certain to provide the reader with evidence, in the form of specific quotations, to support your analysis and evaluation of theme.

Figurative Language

Figurative language is particularly important in analyzing poetry. Examples of figurative language include metaphor, simile, alliteration, hyperbole and personification. University of North Carolina at Pembroke states that it "usually involves a comparison between two things that may not, at first, seem to relate to one another." Figurative language allows the author to express abstract ideas and to communicate emotion by creating new relationships or evoking commonly held beliefs.

Book Critique

- **Get to the point**

When you begin writing the critique, think about what your thesis is. Will your review be favorable, or do you plan to advise your readers to spend their money elsewhere? *Remember to make your thesis known in the first few lines of your review.* This will help your reader focus and will provide you with an argument for your review.

- **Don't forget the details**

Briefly include some biographical information about the author at the beginning of your critique. Is this his or her first book? If not, what types of books has he or she written before? How has his or her background qualified him or her to write about this particular subject? Before launching into your analysis, ***briefly tell the reader what the book is about.***

- **Support your argument with direct quotes**

Carefully select passages from the book you are critiquing to support your argument. These passages will help readers understand what you mean when you write that the book is a tender love story, a violent murder mystery, or a dull yawner. A book critique is not rocket science; you are simply communicating your impressions and opinions of an author's work. What's more, always remember to edit and proofread your review multiple times before turning it in. If you're going to rip a novel apart for being overly verbose and hard to follow, you'd better triple check to make sure your review is grammatically sound and succinct!