

Directions: Compose an essay (5 paragraphs minimum, double-spaced) in response to one of the following prompts. Essays must have a thesis and should be supported by the text. Successful papers will be well organized and remain focused on the thesis. Remember that literary analysis essays focus on one element of the story, not everything that occurs to you about the text. Don't panic at the complexity of the prompts. This is just to get you used to seeing prompts like this in the future. I will help you with the interpretation of the prompts and the planning phase of the paper. Due: April 17th. If you are not going to be here Friday, I expect you to submit it earlier in the week.

1. Writers often highlight the values of a culture or society by using characters who are alienated from that culture or society because of gender, race, class, or creed. Show how a character's alienation in this novel reveals the surrounding society's assumptions and moral values.
2. The meaning of some literary works is often enhanced by sustained allusion to myths, the Bible or other works of literature. Explain the allusion that predominates in the work and analyze how it enhances the work's meaning.
3. In great literature, no scene of violence exists for its own sake. Choose a work of literary merit that confronts the reader with a scene or scenes of violence. Explain how the scene or scenes contribute to the meaning of the complete work.
4. Novels and plays often include scenes of weddings, funerals, parties, and other social occasions. Such scenes may reveal the values of the characters and the society in which they live. Discuss the contribution the scene makes to the meaning of the work as a whole.
5. Write an essay about a novel or play in which a character who appears briefly-or does not appear at all-is still a significant presence. Describe how the character functions in the work and how he or she affects such matters as action, theme, or development of other characters.
6. In a literary work, a minor character, often known as a foil, possesses traits that emphasize, by contrast or comparison, the distinctive characteristics and qualities of the main character. For example, the idea or behavior of the minor character might be used to highlight the weaknesses or strengths of the main character. Choose a novel or play in which a minor character serves as a foil to a main character. Then write an essay in which you analyze how the relation between the minor character and the major character illuminates the meaning of the work.

7. Authors may use humor and wit to convey important information about characters and the society they live in. Through humor, an author can criticize individuals and society in a way that is both more appealing and less threatening to audiences. Identify specific examples of humor. Explain how the author employs humor to point out individual and/or societal flaws, and discuss the overall effect of humor on the work.
8. A bildungsroman, or coming-of-age novel, recounts the psychological or moral development of its protagonist from youth to maturity, when this character recognizes his or her place in the world. Select a single pivotal moment in the psychological or moral development of the protagonist of a bildungsroman. Then write a well-organized essay that analyzes how that single moment shapes the meaning of the work as a whole.
9. In some works of literature, childhood and adolescence are portrayed as times graced by innocence and a sense of wonder; in other works, they are depicted as times of tribulation and terror. In your novel, explain how its representation of childhood or adolescence shapes the meaning of the work as a whole.
10. Many writers use a country setting to establish values within a work of literature. For example, the country may be a place of virtue and peace or one of primitivism and ignorance. Analyze how the country setting functions in the work as a whole.
11. Morally ambiguous characters -- characters whose behavior discourages readers from identifying them as purely evil or purely good -- are at the heart of many works of literature. Explain how the character can be viewed as morally ambiguous and why his or her moral ambiguity is significant to the work as a whole.
12. Often in literature, a character's success in achieving goals depends on keeping a secret and divulging it only at the right moment, if at all. Choose a novel or play of literary merit that requires a character to keep a secret. In a well-organized essay, briefly explain the necessity for secrecy and how the character's choice to reveal or keep the secret affects the plot and contributes to the meaning of the work as a whole.

Thesis Statement (or Claim): the argument for the entire paper.

One Option:

_____ shows _____

In the novel *Elephant Run*, (title italicized or underlined) Roland Smith (author) uses
(an element or device from the story) to show (a theme).

Elements: Setting, pt. of view, character, plot

Devices: (to name a few: imagery, allusion, sound...

In the novel *Elephant Run*, Roland Smith
uses the minor character, Bukong, to show the complexity of the war in Burma.

Another option: (3-part thesis or claim)

_____ shows _____, _____

and _____. (3-part thesis)

(An element or device from the story) shows (3 specific effects)

Another Option: Definition

_____ is _____.

(a character, the story itself, the actions) is/are (a definition)

Examples:

In the short story "War Party" by Louis L'Amour, Ma is a feminist.

The short story "War Party" by Louis L'Amour is a Bildungsroman

The conch in *Lord of the Flies* represents democracy.

Try out some thesis statements here:

Thesis Statement: (locate at end of intro)

Thesis Statement: (end of intro)

Thesis Statement: (end of intro)

Thesis Statement: (end of intro)

Thesis Statement: (end of intro)

Thesis Statement: (end of intro)

Thesis Statement: (end of intro)
