

1-TOM, 10-SON
ANALYSIS OF LITERARY TEXT
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Annotation: Nonetheless, reading a literary work in an English class requires you to read in a unique way: you must conduct literary analysis. Analyzing something entails disassembling it into smaller components and analyzing each one's function separately and collectively. Examining every component of a play, poem, short story, or novel—character, setting, tone, and imagery, for example—and considering how the author employs each component to achieve specific effects is known as literary analysis.

A literary essay differs from a book review in that it does not inquire about your opinion of the book or whether you would suggest it to another reader. A literary essay differs from the type of book report you may have written in school, where you were required to provide an overview of the plot. "How does this piece of literature actually work?" is the question posed in a literary essay for high school or college. "Why might the author have made the choices he or she did?" and "How does it do what it does?"

Key words: Analysis of literary text, Ask Questions, Collect evidence, Construct thesis, Develop and organize arguments, Write introduction, Write the body paragraphs and Write the conclusion.

The Seven Steps

Nobody is born with the ability to analyze literature; it's a process you can become proficient in. You'll be able to devise a strategy that suits you as you write and think in this manner more often. But in the interim, consider these seven fundamental guidelines for crafting a strong literary essay.

1. ASK QUESTIONS.

Upon receiving a literary essay assignment in class, your instructor will frequently furnish you with a compilation of writing exercises. How fortunate you are! All that's left to do is select one. Choose a topic that piques your curiosity, please. Starting with a topic you enjoy thinking about will make the process much easier and more enjoyable for you. However, you may become a little anxious if you are



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required to think of a topic on your own. It is possible that you have too many ideas or none at all. Do not fret. Breathe deeply, then begin by asking yourself the following questions:

What got to you?

Did you find yourself thinking about a certain scene, line, or image a lot? You can probably use it as inspiration to write an interesting essay if it captivated you.

What gave you trouble?

Perhaps a certain character's behavior caught you off guard, or perhaps the book's ending left you perplexed. A literary work's confusing passages are like to a loose thread in a sweater—if you yank on it, the entire thing can come apart. You may learn a lot about the work as a whole by asking yourself why the author choose to write about that character or situation in that particular way.

Were any ironies or inconsistencies apparent to you?

Great literary essays acknowledge and clarify the complexity found in great literary works. Perhaps the book's title, *Happy Days*, completely contradicts the subject content, which is starving orphans perishing in the woods. It's possible that the main character behaves differently toward his friends and associates than he does toward his family. You have the makings of a fantastic essay if you can figure out how to reconcile the contradicting aspects of a piece.

2. COLLECT EVIDENCE

After determining the question you wish to address, it is time to search the book for information that will enable you to address the issue. It's okay if you're not sure what you want to say yet; at this point, you're merely gathering information and thoughts and allowing them to slowly simmer. Note any texts, symbols, pictures, or scenes that relate to your subject. You'll eventually begin drawing connections between these instances and your argument will become clear.

Here is a quick rundown of the elements that make up every single literary masterpiece. These are the components you will examine in your essay and present as proof to back up your claims. See the Glossary of Literary Terms at the end of this section for additional information on the components of literary works.

Pieces of the Story

These are the work's whats: what occurs, where it occurs, and to whom it occurs.

Plot every action and occurrence in the work.

3. CONSTRUCT THESIS



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It's time to create your thesis statement after you've reviewed all of the supporting material and have decided how you want to respond to the inquiry. A thesis is a statement about a piece of literature that needs arguments and proof to back it up. The majority of your paper will be devoted to attempting to substantiate the thesis statement, which is the central idea of a literary essay. One strong thesis would be:

Debatable.

It is a fact, not a concept, that "The Great Gatsby describes New York society in the 1920s."

demonstrable by means of literary evidence.

The thesis statement, "Hamlet is a confusing but ultimately very well-written play," is poor since it expresses the author's subjective assessment of the work. It's debatable, to be sure, but it's not a claim that can be validated or backed up by instances from the play itself.

Astonishing.

The premise that "both George and Lenny change a great deal in *Of Mice and Men*" is weak as it is so clear. A compelling thesis will make the case for a reading of the text that is not obvious first.

4. DEVELOP AND ORGANIZE ARGUMENTS

The body of your essay will be composed of the arguments and instances that bolster your thesis. Steps 3 and 4 are likely to be completed concurrently, as you can't fully develop your thesis statement until you know how your argument will be organized.

There isn't a single persuasive strategy that works in every situation. You can be asked to compare and contrast two characters for one essay topic, and then trace an image through a specific literary work for another. Different types of arguments and responses are necessary for these questions. We'll go over three popular types of essay prompts as well as some techniques for creating a strong, persuasive argument below.

Sounds quite simple, doesn't it? It should be easy enough to read the play, highlight each instance of a knife in *Macbeth*, and then list them in your essay according to their appearances. Okay, not precisely. Your teacher is not looking for a list of examples. He or she is looking for evidence that you are able to draw conclusions from those examples; this is what separates analysis from summary. Consider the many settings and effects of knives' appearance in the play as seen in the *Macbeth* example. There are imagined and real knives in *Macbeth*; there are knives



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that kill and knives that just menace. Sort and arrange your examples to provide them with a sense of hierarchy. Lastly, remember the overall effect at all times.

5. WRITE THE INTRODUCTION.

The entire essay is set up in your beginning. This is the section in which you introduce your subject and clearly state the specific problems and queries you will be tackling. It's also the opportunity for you to identify yourself to your readers as the author. A strong literary essay presents its author right away as an informed, authoritative person.

The length of an introduction can vary based on the essay's overall length, but in a conventional five-paragraph essay, it shouldn't exceed one paragraph. Regardless of length, your introduction must.

Give any context that is required.

The reader should be placed in context and informed of what to expect from your introduction. Which book are you talking about? Which figures? What subject are you going to cover?

Address the "So what?" query.

Why is this a significant topic, and what makes your point of view unique? The goal of your introduction should be to draw the reader in by indicating how unexpected or paradoxical your argument is. Literary essays uncover less-obvious truths and draw unexpected connections.

Describe your thesis. This typically occurs toward the conclusion of your introduction, or close .

6. WRITE THE CONCLUSION

Just as you used the introduction to ground your readers in the topic before providing your thesis, you'll use the conclusion to quickly summarize the specifics learned thus far and then hint at the broader implications of your topic. A good conclusion will:

IN CONCLUSION.

In my essay has most likely treated a very specific element of the work—a single character, a small set of images, or a particular passage. In your conclusion, try to show how this narrow discussion has wider implications for the work overall. If your essay on *To Kill a Mockingbird* focused on the character of Boo Radley, for example, you might want to include a bit in your conclusion about how he fits into the novel's larger message about childhood, innocence, or family life.



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A conclusion should open up your highly specific, focused discussion, but it should do so without drawing a sweeping lesson about life or human nature. Making such observations may be part of the point of reading, but it's almost always a mistake in essays, where these observations tend to sound overly dramatic or simply silly.

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