

Week 25—Step 2 of Literary Analysis Essay

Now that you have written a thesis statement and developed an outline for your literary analysis essay, it's time to write your rough draft. (If I have suggested that you revise the structure of your outline, do that before writing your rough draft so that you can follow your outline.)

EVIDENCE AND ANALYSIS: Remember that that in your essay you are arguing for your particular interpretation of the text. To do this, you use evidence from the book (facts and quotations) and then *analyze and interpret* that evidence, showing how it proves your point. In the following paragraph, which we've discussed before in class, evidence is in blue, and analysis/interpretation is in green.

The elegiac poem “The Wanderer” expresses the hopelessness of a pagan who looks to himself to find strength when his world falls apart. Although the earth-walker speaks of finding favor with God and enjoying His mildness at the beginning and end of the work, these references do not seem to fit with the general message of the story. “Fate the mighty” (“The Wanderer,” Paragraph 9) seems to ordain the outcome of the narrator’s existence, and God seems far removed, perhaps even at fault for the destruction: “So the Maker of mankind laid waste this dwelling-place” (Paragraph 9). In the spirit of Germanic and pagan heroes, the earth-walker attempts to rely on his inner strength to support him in his troubles: “I cannot think why the thoughts of my heart should not grow dark when I consider all the life of men through this world . . . The wise man must be patient, must never be too hot-hearted, nor too hasty of speech, nor too fearful, nor too glad, nor too greedy for wealth, nor ever eager to boast before he has not thought clearly” (Paragraph 7). When the earth-walker sees the evil and sorrow in the world, when his thoughts “grow dark,” he does not seek comfort in God. Instead he tries to save himself, in a sense, by following the virtues of a wise man, and this gives him no comfort.

QUOTATIONS: Each of your paragraphs should include at least one quotation from the book, and you should have at least as many words of your own analysis as words of quotation. Include the page number in parentheses at the end of every quotation! It should look like this: “I’ve used a colon to connect this quotation to the lead-in sentence. Now I’m going to follow the quotation with the page reference” (76). Notice that the period comes after the parentheses, not inside the quotation marks.

MLA FORMAT: In this essay, we will work toward following the Modern Language Association (MLA) guidelines for paper format. MLA style is the standard format for all papers in the discipline of English, as well as in many other academic areas. As a first step toward MLA format, your rough draft should:

- be in Times New Roman 12-point font,
- be double-spaced,
- have one-inch margins on all sides.

As you work, go back over the handout on introductions, body paragraphs, and conclusions.

Have you included all the elements of each part of your paper? Have you followed your outline?
Is your argument clear and persuasive?

In summary, this is what you should turn in on Friday, March 25:

A literary analysis essay of 750 - 1000 words.

Remember to proofread all your work before turning it in!

Allotment of Points for Rough Draft

Thesis: 10

Length: 10

Grammar: 5

Organization: 10

Use of Quotations: 5

Analysis/Interpretation: 5

Paper Format: 5

Total: __ / 50 = __% = __ / 10