

WRITING AN ANALYSIS OF A LITERARY WORK:

You must include an **analysis of a theme** for EACH of these assignments. To accomplish this goal, you will closely study, analyze and discuss one or two elements of literature. **To successfully complete the two assigned papers for this class you must closely read, study and apply the “Write Critiques” handout.**

The following is excerpted from *The Bedford Guide for College Writers, 5th edition*, by X. J. Kennedy, Dorothy M. Kennedy, and Sylvia A Holladay.

LEARNING BY WRITING

Assignment #1: Analyzing a Literary Work: *Things Fall Apart*. A literary critic analyzes, interprets, and evaluates a work of literature. The critic sees and understands deeply not because he or she has some special inspiration or power but because he or she has studied the piece of writing very carefully. For this assignment, you are to be a critic – analyzing, interpreting, and evaluating a literary selection for your classmates. You will deepen their understanding because you will have devoted time and effort to digging out the meaning and testing it with evidence from the work itself. Even if they too have studied the work carefully, you will try to convince them that your interpretation is valid.

Write an essay [of 5 – 6 typewritten pages, or 1,000 words minimum] interpreting one or more aspects of a literary work that intrigues you or that you think expresses a worthwhile meaning...After careful analysis of the literary work, you will become the expert critic, explaining the meaning you discern, supporting your interpretation with evidence from the work itself as well as from your own experience, and evaluating the effectiveness of the literary elements used by the author and the significance of the theme. You may draw from any of your four resources – recall, observation, conversation, imagination. Probably you'll use several critical thinking skills – analyzing the parts of the work; comparing and contrasting characters in the story, ...; identifying causal relationships in the action of the work; taking a stand on your interpretation; proposing a solution to a puzzling part of the work or to a problem posed by the author (perhaps as a theme); and evaluating the quality of the work...

You cannot attempt to include everything about the work in your paper, so you should focus on one element (such as character, setting, or theme) or the interrelationship of two or three elements...The purpose of your essay is to help your classmates...to understand the meaning of the work and to gain insight into their own lives just as you have through your careful study.

Assignment #2: For analysis of the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* you will follow the directions for assignment #1 and **in addition**, you will need to access not only the novel but five (5) outside sources. One of these may be a published note source such as *Cliff's* or *Spark's*. You may use the film as one source, but be careful to use it to show an illustration of a theme, character, setting or other literary aspect. Additional sources may be in the form of critiques or analytical works by other authors or other texts used to illuminate and illustrate your argument. This is a 7 - 8 page (2,000 words minimum) paper.

GRADING CRITERIA:

You will be graded according to how well you meet the criteria set forth in the rubric for English 101. On a four quadrant grid, 25% is thesis/theme; 25% is on argument/logic/organization/flow; 25% is on detail, example, quotations; and 25% is on MLA format, Work(s) Cited page, grammar, mechanics, spelling and word usage.