

English 102: Introduction to Literature
Prof. Chiang-Schultheiss
Literature Essay #1

Writing Assignment:

Choose one story we've read so far this semester and discuss some narrow aspect of that work. You may choose to discuss the use of plot, setting, characterization, point of view, or symbolism. Explain how one of these five aspects works in the short story to unify the artistic expression.

Do not use library or Internet-based sources for this assignment. You will be evaluated based on how well you can discuss the story on your own.

(Re)read the following sections from your textbook:

- "Writing about Literature" (6-27)
- "Writing Literary Arguments (28-44)

The "CHECKLISTS," which appear after the introductory material for each chapter, can be helpful in guiding and framing your discussion in your essay.

- **Page length:** Your essay must be 3-5 typed, double-spaced pages.
- **Manuscript Conventions:** use the required MLA essay template located on the course website. You must customize this and get it approved by Prof. CS.
- **Audience:** freshman college students; assume they have read the work you are discussing.
- **Purpose:** to interpret and to explain.
- **SAE:** Remember, your paper must follow the basic conventions of standard American written English (correct mechanics, usage, grammar, spelling, punctuation, sentence structure, and so forth). Be sure to use the present tense whenever you discuss the fictional events in the story.
- **MLA:** in-text-parenthetical notes and a Work Cited page are required to document your work.
- **Due Date:** _____

Writing the Introduction:

Make sure you mention in the introduction of your essay the **author** and **title** (in quotation marks) of the short story that you are analyzing. Briefly summarize what the story is about in no more than a couple sentences. Be sure to state your thesis at the end of the introductory paragraph.

Writing the Main Body Paragraphs:

Depending on the aspect of the target text you are analyzing, be sure that you find a clear and logical way to **organize** these supporting paragraphs. Chronological order is one method, but it usually is not the best. But do use an **organizing principle** that is suitable to what you are trying to explain about the short story. Sometimes using emphatic order is a successful method.

Remember to focus on a **single main idea** or point per paragraph, and develop that sub-claim of your thesis with specific, well-chosen **evidence** from the short story. Quote and paraphrase when necessary, and use parenthetical notes whenever you cite information from the story.

Writing the Conclusion:

In this short analytical essay, your goal in writing the conclusion is not to summarize what you already have written but to emphasize how the literary text is unified by the particular aspect you have chosen to discuss.

Final Reminders and Tips:

- You must write your essay in the third person, *avoiding the use of "I" and "you"*. Make the story the focus of the essay, not yourself or your feelings or your reactions.
- As you discuss the story within your essay, remember not to confuse the narrator for the author; they are two entirely different individuals.
- Do not write plot summaries or story reviews; these will jeopardize your grade.

Evaluation Criteria:

- Effective focus of your topic/thesis
- Sufficient supporting evidence from the target text (short story)
- Mechanics, grammar, punctuation, and MLA documentation