

### Essay 1: Applying New Criticism and Psychological Criticism

For this essay assignment, please write **either** a New Critical essay **or** a Psychological Criticism essay on **either** "Young Goodman Brown" **or** "The Birthmark."

I will base your grade on the following criteria:

1. A close reading of the work despite which theoretical position you employ.
2. Your ability to apply the assumptions and practices of the particular theoretical position you choose.
3. How well you interpret the work.
4. Standards of good essay composition, such as an explicitly asserted thesis statement, clear and focused paragraph development that explores and supports your thesis, Standard American Written English (SAWE).

Use a title that has 2 parts. The main title should be inventive but reflect the nature of your paper. Separate this title from the subtitle with a colon. The subtitle should incorporate the particular theoretical framework within which you are analyzing the work. For example: Aylmer's Id: A Psychological Interpretation of Hawthorne's "The Birthmark".

Additional requirements:

1. Page length: 3-4 pages.
2. Cite the short story correctly with quotation marks.
3. Add a Works Cited page giving the text from which you are citing.
4. A thesis statement in the introductory paragraph.
5. Interpretive evidence.
6. Clear logical essay structure.
7. Focused paragraphs.

New Criticism Approach	Psychological Criticism Approach
<p>Prepare to write by making some observations/notes about the text (a close reading). What complexities, tensions, ironies, paradoxes, oppositions, or ambiguities can you find?</p> <p>Next, begin to shape these observations by considering what unifies the text. What theme resolves or ties together the work's complexities? The answer to this question will form the basis of your thesis. Remember, your thesis should be a one sentence claim that is doubttable.</p> <p>Then, support your thesis with arguments and with textual evidence. In other words, explain specifically how the parts of the poem work together. Show how and why you arrived at the thesis above rather than some other, discussing as many poetic elements as relevant or necessary.</p>	<p>A good way to start is to look at the handout on psychological terms/concepts and see how each one does or does not relate to the work in question. You may then decide to focus on a single character, the relationship between characters, meaningful symbolism, narrative patterns, or even the life of the author (if you know a bit about it—but research is not necessary).</p> <p>Whatever your focus, you will need to support your observations by using tenets of psychological theory to explain, for example, why a character acts the way she does. Or, you may need to show how characters follow (or deviate from) well-established patterns of behavior or take part in archetypal situations, etc.</p> <p>Finally, don't just identify and write about what you see as potentially psychologically significant, but use your observations to support a doubttable and coherent interpretation of the work as a whole. In other words, answer the question of how the latent content of the text informs our understanding of its meaning.</p>