

ENG3U: Independent Study Unit: Investigation of a Classic

Assignment

- To read a classic work of literature and to create an essay that explores some aspect of that work in a convincing and sophisticated manner
- To use academic research to support your arguments
- To design and structure an essay investigation in a logical and compelling manner

Directions

1. First, **choose a book** widely considered to be a “classic” from the list on the next page. Your book does not need to be on the list, but if it is not, it must be approved by the teacher. Note that you must read a book that you have never read before, and in order to be approved, books should have been written close to, or before, 1900 and be widely acclaimed.
2. **Analysis:** Read your book and complete the attached analysis form by **Tuesday, October 31st**. The analysis sheets will be worth 10% of the assignment mark (the overall assignment being worth 15% of your course mark).
3. **Purpose Question:** Pick an angle to explore by developing a purpose question. This is a major component of this essay, and it is a difficult task. What you choose to explore will largely depend on the content of your book.

To determine your purpose statement, create several to begin with, using the exercise sheet that Mr. Vance will provide. Develop possible purpose questions according to the elements of story. (Do not use the sample questions – you must come up with your own.)

- a. *Setting:* eg., “How do the social expectations of aristocratic Russia lead to conflict for the characters in Tolstoy’s *Anna Karenina*?”
- b. *Plot/Conflict:* eg., “How does Raskolnikov’s inner turmoil lead to external conflict in Dostoevsky’s *Crime and Punishment*?”
- c. *Character:* eg., “How does Charles Darnay’s dramatic transformation help to support the themes in Dicken’s *A Tale of Two Cities*?”
- d. *Theme:* eg., “In what ways does Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby* function as a warning for his readers?”
- e. *Style:* eg., “How does Tolkien’s heavy use of description contribute to our understanding of the characters in *The Fellowship of the Ring*?”

Once you have developed several potential purpose questions, choose one that you think is interesting, important, and possible to answer! Note that the strength and creativity of the purpose question will play a large role in determining the strength of the overall argument of your essay.

4. **Research:** Find at least **two** good external academic sources that will provide you with some information to answer your question. Read these sources carefully, and take notes on aspects that help you answer your purpose question. **Use at least one good quote from each source**, remembering to write down the publication details for that source so that you’ll be able to properly cite it later. *Note that these quotes from external sources need to actually help answer your question in your body paragraphs, not just provide you with something snappy to use in your introduction/conclusion.*

Your purpose question and external research will be due on Tuesday, November 7th, and will be worth 10% of your project mark.

5. **Outline:** Construct a thesis statement to answer your purpose question, and create a formal outline, developing your argument into points and subpoints, and identifying specific evidence from the novel (quotes and specific examples) to support each. Your formal outline will be due **on Tuesday, November 21st**, and it will be worth 10% of your project mark.
6. **Final Essay:** From your outline, construct your essay, creating excellent flow within and between your points. **It should be 5-6 pages, double-spaced (not including the Works Cited section).** Your final essay will be due two weeks after you receive your outline back, and it will be worth 75% of your overall project mark. Your essay must include the following components:
 - a. A first page that accurately follows the rules of the MLA style guide.
 - b. An introduction justifying your choice of topic and your purpose question – why is a discussion of this important? A strong introduction will include some sort of hook (quote, startling statement, or rhetorical question) to grab the audience’s attention, a discussion of the book and purpose question, and a thesis that answers the purpose question.
 - c. Body paragraphs that develop the main points in your argument, using several pieces of specific evidence (especially quotes and specific examples that are **cited**) in each paragraph.
 - d. A compelling conclusion that reiterates your thesis and summarizes your evidence supporting each of your main points. A strong conclusion will end on a snappy or thought-provoking note, suggesting some course of action or reminding the reader of the importance of the thesis.
 - e. A strong works-cited page at the end (note that the majority of your citations should be from your chosen book, but **you should make good use of two secondary sources** as well).
 - f. Basically, do just what you did with the “All or Nothing” essay – but use subpoints in this essay as well.
7. **Assessment: This final essay is a heavily weighted assignment. Students are URGED to make use of the assessment box – seek feedback on your work before you have it evaluated!!!**

Important Notes

- Your review must be written as an essay: There should be no headings. The paper may be between five and six pages (not including title page and works cited). Please respect the page limit.
- When you refer to the author, use her or his last name, not first name. Eg. For Harper Lee say, “In the novel, Lee tells the story from the point of view of Scout or Jean Louise Finch.”
- As this is a university-level assignment, it is important that you learn to quote from the text. In order to get level 4s on this essay, it will be essential to use several quotes in each body paragraph to demonstrate and reinforce your points. If you simply use specific examples, the most you will be able to achieve will be a level 2+.
- **Turnitin: Note that all essays should be submitted to turnitin.com by the beginning of class on the due date.**
 - Class ID: 16147912
 - Enrollment password: **reading**
- Make sure to format your paper according to the requirements of MLA 8.

	Level 1 (50%-59%)	Level 2 (60%-69%)	Level 3 (70%-79%)	Level 4 – to Level 4 (80%-89%)	Level 4 to Level 4+ (90%-100%)
	Below Expectations	Approaching Expectations	Meeting Expectations	Beyond Expectations	
Thinking/Inquiry (40) -Overall argument and thesis statement	Overall argument has more than one significant problem; your thesis has a significant issue, or it is ineffective in answering your topic question, but an effort is demonstrated	Overall argument has a significant problem; there is a problem with your thesis, or it doesn't quite answer your question.	Overall argument is mostly good; thesis is simple, but it works.	Overall argument is very strong and logical; thesis is well developed and contains strong supporting points to back it up.	Overall argument in exceptionally creative and insightful ; exceptionally well-formulated thesis is excellent in its development and in the insight of its supporting points.
-Quality of evidence in support of thesis (including good use of two external sources)	Little or ineffective evidence given, but an effort is demonstrated	Most points have some form of specific evidence, but you may need to use more quotes to demonstrate the truth of your claims.	Each paragraph is well supported by specific evidence, including at least two relevant and well explained quotes.	Each paragraph is very well supported with a range of specific evidence, including multiple well explained and well incorporated quotes.	Each paragraph is overwhelmingly supported with a great range of specific evidence, including several excellent, well-incorporated and well-explained quotes.
Communication (40) -Clarity, logical order	Points are random and, at this point, ineffective; paper is unclear and/or confusing, but an effort is demonstrated.	Organization is emerging; points may not be ordered appropriately (eg., strongest point is in the middle instead of the end); there may be some clarity issues that detract from your paper.	Every point is relatively clear and in logical order in relationship to the thesis and the other points.	Every point is very clear and in logical order in relationship to the thesis and the other points.	Your paper demonstrates superior clarity in expression and in the relationship of points to the thesis and to each other.
-Transitions between points (especially topic and concluding sentences)	Your paper has few, if any, transitions, which makes it really hard to follow your argument, but an effort is demonstrated.	Your paper is missing several important topic or concluding sentences, and as such it can be fairly difficult to follow the progression of your argument.	Your paper contains some good transitions that help the reader keep track of your overall argument. You may occasionally miss a topic or concluding sentence.	Your paper contains very good topic and concluding sentences in each point, making it easy to follow the progression of your argument.	Your paper contains excellent topic and concluding sentences in each point, and each of these transitions seems smooth and not forced.
-Appropriateness of style, expressed in formal English (phrasing, formality, vocabulary, flow)	-Your writing is currently suffering from significant formality issues and/or mundane language. Keep working on using even more powerful and precise language. -Your writing is not flowing smoothly, and as such, it is hard to understand. Use transitional words and vary your sentence structure to improve.	-Your writing in this paper is not yet effective due to significant formality issues and/or mundane language. Keep working on using even more powerful and precise language. -You are having difficulty in making your writing flow smoothly; use transitional words and vary your sentence structure to improve.	-Your writing is usually effective, but your paper contains some formality issues or mundane language. Keep working on using even more powerful and precise language. -Your flow is mostly good, but occasionally a little choppy, unnatural, or disjointed.	-Your writing is quite effective in its use of precise, powerful language, and in its range of vocabulary. -Your flow seems natural and smooth due to strong use of transitional words/phrases and a good variety of sentence structure.	-Your writing is exceptionally effective in its use of creative, compelling language as well as complex vocabulary and other literary devices where appropriate. -Your writing flows beautifully due to your excellent use of transitional phrases and a strong variety of sentence structure.
-Grammatical Precision and Spelling	Your writing contains mostly errors, including many sentence structure difficulties, but an effort is demonstrated.	Your writing contains many insignificant errors, or some sentence structure errors.	Your writing contains some insignificant errors, but not enough to detract from the clarity of your points.	Your writing contains only a few insignificant errors; overall excellent grammar.	Your writing contains very few errors at all – you have clearly proofread this carefully.
Application (20) -Strength and power of introduction and conclusion	Your introduction and/or conclusion is very short and undeveloped, or there is not enough difference between them.	Your introduction and/or conclusion is not quite full enough. Expand these discussions to add to their clarity and power.	Your introduction and conclusion are simple, but effective. Keep working to make them even more forceful and compelling.	Your introduction and conclusion are clear and effective, and they are also beginning to be powerful in their ability to engage the reader.	Your introduction and conclusion are exceptionally effective in their clarity, and moreover, they are very powerful and compelling.
-Success in adhering to the requirements of the assignment (Note that you cannot pass the application section without citations and a works cited page.)	Five of the Level 4+ requirements are met, but an effort is demonstrated	Six of the Level 4+ requirements is met	Seven of the Level 4+ requirements are met	Eight of the Level 4+ requirements are met	-Correct first-page layout -Properly double-spaced -Pages are numbered -No spaces between paragraphs -At least two quotes per body paragraph -Proper 1-inch margins -No longer than 6 pages long (excluding "Works Cited") -Proper citations used -Strong "Works Cited" page

Book Suggestions

British:

- Austen, Jane
 - *Mansfield Park*
 - *Pride and Prejudice*
 - *Northanger Abbey*
 - *Sense and Sensibility*
 - *Emma*
- Bronte, Anne
 - *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*
- Bronte, Charlotte
 - *Jane Eyre*
- Bronte, Emily
 - *Wuthering Heights*
- Dickens, Charles
 - *A Tale of Two Cities*
 - *Oliver Twist*
- *David Copperfield*
- *Pickwick Papers*
- *Great Expectations*
- *Hard Times*
- *Nicholas Nickleby*
- Eliot, George
 - *Silas Marner*
- Hardy, Thomas
 - *Far from the Madding Crowd*
 - *Mayor of Casterbridge*
 - *Tess of the D'Urburvilles*
- Thackeray, William
 - *Vanity Fair*
- Wilde, Oscar
 - *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

American:

- Cooper, William Fenimore
 - *The Last of the Mohicans*
- Fitzgerald, F. Scott
 - *The Great Gatsby*
- Hemingway, Ernest
 - *A Farewell to Arms*
 - *For Whom the Bell Tolls*
 - *The Old Man and the Sea*
- Steinbeck, John
 - *Of Mice and Men*
 - *The Grapes of Wrath*
- Twain, Mark
 - *Huckleberry Finn*
- Hawthorne, Nathaniel
 - *The Scarlet Letter*

Russian:

- Dostoyevsky, Fyodor
 - *Crime and Punishment*
 - *The Brothers Karamazov*
- Tolstoy, Leo
 - *Anna Karenina*

You may also read one of the three parts of J. R. R. Tolkien's trilogy, *The Lord of the Rings*, if you have not read it before, and if you have not written an essay on any of this series for school before.

ANY OTHER BOOKS MUST BE APPROVED BY THE TEACHER.

Have fun, and happy reading!