

How to Write an Essay (5-Paragraph Theme)

Title (Write a title that catches the reader's interest & hints at your point)

Introduction: (Tell 'em what you're going to tell 'em)

Attention Grabber (Lead): The purpose of the attention grabber is to grab the reader's attention. You will have the reader's full attention when you first begin your paper, so you must start with something that makes the reader want to keep reading. Some good ideas for an attention grabber include: *a quote, a metaphor, a statistic, hypothetical situations, rhetorical questions (questions you do not want an answer to), an anecdote (very short story that is often funny), painting a picture (describe in detail), listing interesting facts, making a comparison, a statement of purpose*, etc. **Link or Background Material:** After you have the reader's attention, you must transition into the topic of your paper. The background material is the place in which you will tell your reader what your paper is about. *This is a good place for the title and the author's name.* **Thesis (Point):** A Thesis is usually 1 sentence that tells the reader the main point of your paper. It tells the reader everything you will cover (and the exact order in which you will cover it).

Body: (Tell 'em- and Prove It!)

Paragraph 1: 1. Point Sentence: Each paragraph starts with a main/topic sentence. This sentence is like a mini-thesis that is just for that paragraph. The topic sentence should tell the reader everything that is going to be covered in that paragraph. The main/topic sentence should relate directly to your thesis (I should be able to look at your thesis and see where your main/topic sentence came from). **2. Evidence:** Your main/topic sentence made a claim and now you must "prove" it. One way to prove your main/topic sentence is through short quotes. Take the text directly from the story, movie, etc. Another way to prove your main/topic sentence is to *very briefly* retell part of the story. Be sure to make *your point* the focus and not the story (this is not a book report!) **3. Analysis of Evidence:** Explain in your own words how this quote proves your main/topic sentence. **4. Transitional Sentence:** After you have given several examples and quotes that prove your main/topic sentence it is time to move on to another topic/idea. When you change thoughts (switch from one paragraph to the next) you must tell the reader so that they do not become confused. The last sentence in each paragraph of your body should sum up your main point and connect it to your next point.

Paragraphs 2,3,...: Repeat the pattern shown in Paragraph 1 for as many paragraphs as it takes to fully "prove" your thesis statement. The order of the paragraphs should follow the order set out in the thesis statement (feel free to change the thesis statement at any time).

Written Conclusion: (Tell 'em what you told 'em)

Final Summary: Summarizes the whole paper. Either make a statement that restates the main message or highlights the main points you have made and how they relate to the main message. Answers the question "so what?" **Closing Statement (Clincher):** Tells the reader "the end" without actually saying "the end." Gives the reader something to think about or do. Good closing statements include: *quotes, statistics, anecdotes, metaphors, comparisons, an answer to your rhetorical question, etc.*

I. Introduction:

- A. Attention Grabber:
- B. Link (Title and Author Name):
- C. Thesis:

II. Body:

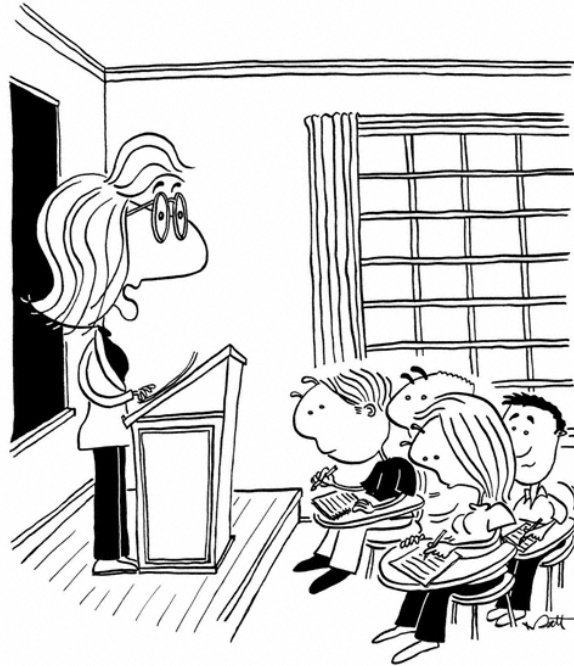
- A. Claim 1:
- B. Evidence 1:
- C. Explanation 1:

- D. Claim 2:
- E. Evidence 2:
- F. Explanation 2:

- G. Claim 3:
- H. Evidence 3:
- I. Explanation 3:

III. Conclusion:

- A. Final Summary:
- B. Closing Statement:



"When writing your essays, I encourage you to think for yourselves while you express what I'd most agree with."

Types of Literary Analysis Essays

1. **Theme Analysis**- Deciding on the author's overarching theme and proving it with evidence from the text.
2. **Character Analysis**- A discussion of one or more characters in the novel looking specifically at how the author creates a dynamic (changing) character through indirect characterization.
3. **Analytical Essay**- Looking at how the author put together the story to create meaning. Focusing on things like plot, setting, tone/voice, figurative language, point of view, character, and dialogue.
4. **Compare and Contrast Essay**- Taking a story and revealing its meaning by noting similarities and differences with another story, an historical event, a different discipline (like physics or anthropology), or something in popular culture.
5. **Lens Essay**- Taking a certain perspective with regards to literary criticism (Marxist, Feminist, Reader-Response, etc.) and using that as the basis of analysis.
6. **Historical Context Essay**- Researching the time in which the story was written and using that as a basis for understanding the story.
7. **Author Centric Essay**- Researching the author's life and using that as a basis for understanding the story.

Examples of the Different Types of Literary Analysis

1. Theme Analysis Essay

In the story "A&P," by John Updike, the main character Sammy makes the leap from an adolescent, knowing little more about life than what he has learned working at the local grocery store, into a man prepared for the rough road that lies ahead. As the story begins, Sammy is nineteen and has no real grasp for the fact that he is about to be living on his own working to support himself. Throughout the course of the story, he changes with a definite step into, first, a young man realizing that he must get out of the hole he is in and further into a man, who has a grasp on reality looking forward to starting his own family.

In the beginning, Sammy is but a youth growing up learning what he knows about life in small town grocery store. His role models include, Stokesie, the twenty-two year-old, supporting a family doing the same job Sammy does yet aspiring to one day have the manager's position, and Lengel, the store manager who most certainly started out in the sa...

2. Character Analysis Essay:

Sammy, in A&P by John Updike, plays a cashier at A&P grocery store. Sammy lives in a small country town in New England. He must be a college or high school student because he still lives with his parents. Sammy is quite intelligent and creative in the way he describes three girls that are dressed in bathing suits. Sammy is at work when they catch his eye. He is mesmerized by them and creatively names all of them by the way they walk and their movements in the store. Sammy's character seems to observe people judgmentally but he would never speak aloud to them about it to the people he was sizing-up in his mind. Sammy could have been not such a popular guy in high school. He sounds, by the way he talks, that he was a cocky loser with no friends when he was growing up in that small country town. Even though Sammy criticizes the way the girls walk and their supposed character in his mind he wou...

3. Analytical Essay

The setting and the point of view of a story are both very important tools used to convey an author's meaning. This can be demonstrated by the fact that if one or both of these characteristics are changed, the story's content and meaning can be altered beyond recognition. In particular, neither the setting nor the point of view in John Updike's "A&P" could be changed without losing the meaning of the story or without having the same effect on the reader.

For example, in "A&P," John Updike places us in the familiar surroundings of a grocery store. This setting is very important to the story because many people have worked in similar settings, and are familiar with the redundancy of the work on a daily basis. Nothing seems to change in the store, and as a result, any variation from the normal routine is quickly noticed and often welcomed by employees. Sammy, a grocery store cashier at the A & P, sees his surroundings as being mundane and non-inter...

4. Compare and Contrast Essay

In the three stories To Build a Fire, The Use of Force, and A and P there are some different conflicts. A conflict is struggle between two or more objects. In these stories the three different conflicts are man versus nature, man versus man, and man versus self. The three stories that contain these conflicts are To Build a Fire by Jack London, The Use of Force by Williams Carlos Williams, and A and P by John Updike. The first story to talk about is To Build a Fire, then The Use of Force, and lastly A and P. The story To Build a Fire by London has one of the most unpredictable conflicts in it. The conflict in this story is man versus nature. The two forces in the story are the man and the freezing cold. In the story a man is trying to get to his destination and the cold weather is stopping him from making it their. To beat the cold the man tries to forget about being cold, chew tobacco and start a fire to stay warm. The cold does defend it by freezing the to...

5. Historical Context Essay

Because of the diversity of positions associated with existentialism, the term is impossible to define precisely. Certain themes common to virtually all existentialist writers can, however, be identified. The term itself suggests one major theme: the stress on concrete individual existence and, consequently, on subjectivity, individual freedom, and choice. Most philosophers since Plato have held that the highest ethical good is the same for everyone; insofar as one approaches moral perfection, one resembles other morally perfect individuals. The 19th-century Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard, who was the first writer to call himself existential, reacted against this tradition by insisting that the highest good for the individual is to find his or her own unique vocation. As he wrote in his jou...

6. Lens Essay

There are days that it would be nice outside and I'll go out for a walk; I'd either go to the park up the block, the Bodega (a Spanish grocery store) at the corner, or a friend's house. I would walk down the sidewalk and it's like I'm a famous person or an expensive car the way guys around me would act, and the thing is that it happens to all women. You get the "looks" by the guy across the street, the "stare" by the men driving by, the "whistles" from the group of guy's sitting on stairs as I walk by, and then there's the occasional "neck-break" when a guy walks by me. All that attention is very uplifting to some and tolerable by most, but when a guy crosses the line and actually speaks his mind, that's when he becomes a sexist pig. In the short story "A&P" by John Updike it's main character Sammy didn't cross the line on being a sexist pig.

From the moment the three girls-"Queenie", "that chunky ...

7. Author Centric Essay

Whether it is novels, short stories or critiques; John Updike gives the reader his analysis on human behavior. He starts with realistic issues and adds a little imagination to create a novel that is rich in quality and relevant to the lifestyles and actions of man (Towers 157). A person's color, gender, and social class all influence and assemble their personality and view on life. Updike expresses this concept in his works and sometimes uses moral dilemmas and discriminations to show the influences. Moral dilemmas are evident in John Updike's novels Brazil and The Coup; related to color gender, and social class.

What attracts one person to another? Michael Faraday discussed how charged molecules in an electric field attract and repel. Molecules that are negatively charged attract the opposite positively charged molecules and like molecules repel (Zitzewitz and Neef 426). John Updike expresses this concept in his characterization of people within the book Bra...