

Name: _____

Date: _____

Period: _____

Literary Analysis

(Close Reading & Theoretical Analysis)

Critically Analyzing Texts | Fourth Quarter Writing Sample

Due: Monday, May 16th

Assignment Directions & Focused Goal

Directions: This paper outlines the assignment expectations for the literary analysis that you will create this quarter. Close Reading is an essential analytical approach in academic study. Get comfy with it, because you will be working with it for the rest of your academic career in literature and composition.

Goal: Through this literary analysis, you will explore the three main components of close reading: (1) the meaning and purpose of the literary production, (2) the author's writing strategy (style), and (3) the language and its role in the interpretation of the text. Furthermore, you will analyze this text through a theoretical lens (a critical approach). Recall the realms of literary criticism: archetypal criticism, feminist criticism, critical race theory, Marxist criticism, and Formalist criticism (or New Criticism). Remember the thesis platforms we discussed in class: perspective, location, gender, race/ethnicity, power hierarchies, socio-economic status, etc.

Part One: Brainstorming & Such

1. Select the text from the list that you would like to critically analyze for the literary analysis:

_____.

2. Select a critical vantage point from which you would like to analyze the text: _____.

3. Draft a working thesis statement (which includes: the title, the author, and the focus of your paper).

Part Two: Dissect & Tear Apart

On the first notecard, write down all the components that tie into the meaning of the text. On the second notecard, write down all of the components that tie into the author's writing strategy. On the third notecard, write down all of the components that tie into the language aspect of the text.

Part Three: The Beloved Outline

Once you have gathered your close reading components, you will make a standard outline (using the standard Roman Numeral format). This will be an extension of both your dissection and brainstorming. In your outline, your topic sentences and thesis will flesh out the outline and begin giving you a more accurate view of what your paper is going to look like.

Part Four: Diverting Drafting Bliss

Assignment: Write a literary analysis (**minimum 2 pages (500 word count) | maximum 4 pages (1000 word count)**) that critically analyzes the text that you selected. You are expected to have a beautifully crafted final draft and a works cited page in MLA format.

Part Five: Posting & Collaboration

On our class WordPress, collaborationnhs.wordpress.com, post your final draft of your literary analysis. Then, pick another literary analysis to read and respond. You need to provide a positive comment and one question.

Final Paper Checklist (Just For You)

___ Introductory Paragraph (20 points): The Theatrical Trailer

- ___ Integrates an introductory statement that includes the title, the author's name, and what the text is about. (4 points)
- ___ Briefly highlights the main components of the plot diagram. (6 points)
- ___ Elaborates on characterization in the text. (4 points)
- ___ Includes a well-constructed and teacher approved thesis statement. (6 points)

___ Supporting Paragraph One: Close Read: Meaning (20 points)

- ___ Includes a topic sentence, which supports thesis statement. (2 point)
- ___ Topic sentence is elaborated. (4 points)
- ___ Includes textual support (in-text quotation and citation). (4 points)
- ___ Includes explanation of how textual support exemplifies topic sentence and includes concluding sentence of how this ties back to thesis. (10 points)

___ Supporting Paragraph Two: Close Read: Writing Strategy (20 points)

- ___ Includes a topic sentence, which supports thesis statement. (2 point)
- ___ Topic sentence elaborated (4 points)
- ___ Includes research support (in-text quotation and citation). (4 points)
- ___ Includes explanation of how textual support exemplifies topic sentence and includes concluding sentence of how this ties back to thesis. (10 points)

___ Supporting Paragraph Three: Close Read: Language (20 points)

- ___ Includes a topic sentence, which supports thesis statement. (2 point)
- ___ Topic sentence elaborated (4 points)
- ___ Includes research support (in-text quotation and citation). (4 points)
- ___ Includes explanation of how textual support exemplifies topic sentence and includes concluding sentence of how this ties back to thesis. (10 points)

___ Conclusion: Tying Back to the Theoretical Premise (16 points)

- ___ Re-states the thesis statement in a new way. (2 points)
- ___ Re-summarizes and highlights meaning, writing strategy, and language. (8 points)
- ___ Delves into how this text adds to the critical literary discourse that you selected. (6 points)

___ Works Cited Page & Paper Format in Correct MLA Format (4 points)

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Text List:

Novels & Play:

- The Color of Water by James McBride
- The Glass Castle by Jeanette Walls
- Life of Pi by Yann Martel
- Night by Elie Wiesel
- A Mid-Summer Night's Dream by William Shakespeare
- Kindred by Octavia Butler
- The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian by Sherman Alexie

Short Stories:

- "The Yellow Wallpaper" by Charlotte Perkins Gilman
- "The Human Chair" by Edogawa Rampo
- "The Thing in the Forest" by A.S. Byatt
- "Sweat" by Zora Neale Hurston
- "Everyday Use" by Alice Walker

Pre-Writing: The Beloved Outline

Sample Literary Analysis Outline

Theoretical Premise: Critical Race Theory

Paragraph One: "The Theatrical Trailer"

- 1. Introductory Statement:** In Sherman Alexie's The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian, Junior narrates his journey as he transfers from the reservation school (Wellpinit) to the all-white school in Reardan.
- 2. Plot Diagram at a Closer Look**
 - A. Exposition:** Junior is born with a brain condition that leads to physical differences and internal complications. His life on the Rez is underprivileged. There is very little money in the school system. His best friend, Rowdy, is one of the only things that Junior has in his life.
 - B. Rising Action:** Junior transfers to Reardan, where he is not accepted initially. However, over time, he gains respect, begins dating Penelope, and joins the basketball team. He begins to find his identity in a predominantly white society.
 - C. Climax:** At the second basketball game at Reardan, Junior and his team beat Wellpinit and Rowdy. However, Junior realizes that his "win" was more of a loss, because he begins losing his tribal identity.
 - D. Falling Action:** There are a plethora of losses among Junior's friends and families on the Rez. His grandmother is hit by a drunk driver. His dad's best friend is shot and killed over the last sip of wine. His sister is too drunk and passed out to notice her trailer is on fire and subsequently dies. He realizes the cause of all unhappiness on the rez is alcohol.
 - E. Resolution:** Rowdy explains that Junior can still be a Spokane Indian and live within white society.
- 3. Characterization**
 - A. Dynamic Characters:** Junior, Rowdy, Roger, Penelope, Mary, Gordy, and Mr. P
Junior is a dynamic character because he gains confidence and identity as the story progresses.
 - B. Static Characters:** Grandmother Spirit, dad, Eugene, Agnes Adams, Mr. Dodge, Miss Warren, etc.
Earl is a static character, because he does not really develop throughout the story. All we know is that he likes Roger and dislikes Junior because he is American Indian.
- 4. Thesis Statement:** In Sherman Alexie's The Absolutely True Diary of a Part Time Indian, the theme of racism is analyzed through Junior's struggles in securing an identity in both white and Spokane society.

Paragraph Two: Close Read on Meaning

- 1. Topic Sentence:** While the difference between societies in this text can be categorized based on race, Sherman Alexie also skillfully provides a realistic view of the effects of alcoholism and poor educational opportunities within the Spokane Indian Reservation.
- 2. Elaboration:** In so, Alexie conjures a more complicated process in Junior establishing a split identity. Since he is both a part of the collective Spokane culture and a part of the white educational society, Junior must seek to maintain two forms of identity in two very different cultures. However, this crisis allows the reader to more readily notice the differences the inequities inherent in each racially denoted institution and location.

3. **Textual Support:** In the text, Junior remarks, “Tolstoy wrote, ‘Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.’ Well, I hate to argue with a Russian genius, but Tolstoy didn’t know Indians. And he didn’t know that all Indian families are unhappy for the same exact reason: the fucking booze” (Alexie 200).
4. **Explanation:** Through Junior’s critique of Tolstoy’s theory, Alexie’s readership can more readily identify a collective issue on the Spokane Indian Reservation. As mentioned in the introduction and text summary, Junior loses his grandmother, sister, and his dad’s best friend to alcohol or alcohol-related events. In addition, the irregularity and instability in Junior’s family revolves around his father’s drinking problem. When Junior is trying to secure his identity, these events and routine inconsistency cause him to question the cause. He initially feels that his betrayal is in some way a part of these deaths. However, under closer scrutiny, the perpetrator is alcohol and subsequent addictions.
5. **Elaboration:** Though alcoholism is an inhibitor to Junior securing an identity, the poor educational system at the tribal school exemplifies inequity in a knowledge-based economy for American Indians as well.
6. **Textual Support:** Junior states, “My school and my tribe are so poor and sad that we have to study from the same dang books our parents studied from. That is absolutely the saddest thing in the world” (Alexie 31).
7. **Explanation:** In a knowledge-based economy, identity formation often revolves around career and socio-economic status. This is scaffolded by one’s educational background. At Wellpinit, Junior is provided with a geometry textbook that is so old his mother learned from the same text. This is symbolic of the lack of funds in the tribal school. From a boarder view, Junior cannot compete in white society or secure a competitive economic position without having an education within a white school. This further perpetuates a divide between equitable education and hinders economic advancement of many American Indians in contemporary society. Both alcoholism on reservations and inequity in education (tied to a particular race) demonstrate a lack of opportunity for Junior.