

Critical/Analytical Response to Literary Texts Essay Format English Language Arts

(How to answer...Discuss the idea the author develops re: topic.)

This format asks that you state a main idea/thesis and support that main idea/thesis with examples to convince your audience that your opinion is true. Use a formal tone for this composition. This means that your final copy should not sound like a conversation between you and a friend. As well, a critical/analytical response should not sound like a journal entry. It should sound confident and polite – **do not use contractions**. Avoid phrases such as “I think that...”, “In my opinion...”, “If you ask me...”, and “As you can see...”. The response requires a writer to be an informed and confident reader. Become an expert on the text you will be writing about by including a close critical reading focusing on the topic question.

I. INTRODUCTION

- a. MOTIVATOR – general, theme-like statement to introduce the topic in the question: definition, statistic, quotation, or intriguing statement.
- b. TRANSITION - into **how this topic is developed**. State the genre, literature and the text creator you will be discussing (e.g. In the text . . . , the author use characters and situations to illustrate _____)
- c. CONTROLLING IDEA/THESIS STATEMENT: This is where you focus your essay for your reader into theme-like specific statements. This is the answer to the question in one clear and concise statement. These statements are not text specific, though must be based on the idea you will show is developed. Look at your examples and what they will support before writing your thesis.
Clearly state the idea you are going to discuss and develop in your essay; do NOT go into detailed specifics, for these belong in the body paragraphs for support!

II. BODY PARAGRAPHS

The information in your developmental paragraphs supports and proves your controlling idea/thesis statement to be believable and truthful. **Three** body paragraphs/arguments are required.

- a. CONTROLLING STATEMENT/TOPIC SENTENCE: Topic sentence: a general statement; the point from the introduction you will be addressing/supporting/proving in this paragraph.
- b. EXAMPLE: use a min. of three examples or specific details (quotations and paraphrasing the text) to develop and argue your topic sentence.

HOW TO... create the **Specific Example** from the text you're writing about. Find an example you can explain and/or quote from the text you've been provided with, which supports the controlling statement and proves it true. State the situation from the piece of literature, what happens/how the situation is addressed, and what the outcome of the situation is to adequately prove your point.

Support should be **explicit, precise, and deliberately chosen** to reinforce your idea in a deliberate and meaningful way. **Do NOT summarize the text!!!!**

EXPLANATION: qualify the connection between your controlling statement and your example – how does your example support the controlling statement of your paragraph? Communicate how the example demonstrates, develops, and/or reflects the idea from your controlling statement. Explain the importance of the quotation you used. YOU are the expert – it is YOUR job to explain all connections and revelations in the example(s). These connections need to relate back to the thesis statement. EXAMPLES WITHOUT STRONG CONNECTIONS MEAN VERY LITTLE!!

- c. SUMMATIVE STATEMENT: Sum up your paragraph's point/argument as it relates to the controlling idea of your essay. Remind your reader about the point you have made in your paragraph.

III. CONCLUSION

- a. REWORDED THESIS AND LITERARY SOURCE
- b. SUMMARIZE your main points in the same order as your body paragraph. Do not introduce any new ideas or details.
- c. CLINCHER: End with a thought provoking statement on your topic that will leave your reader thinking about and with an impression of your overall argument – this should be a strong statement that sums up your overall argument.