

# Essay 1: Short Story

Prompt and Instructions

## Essay 1 Purpose

Students should be able to write well-organized essays on fiction, document research, and examine elements of fiction, philosophical and historical contexts of literature, and literary themes and ideas. These essays should demonstrate an understanding of research formatting and documentation within current MLA standards.

## Instructions

Compose a 4-5 page analysis of one or two short stories of your choice. Annotation and explication are the foundations of analysis, so do not neglect them as you work to complete this essay. You are free to choose from all of the assigned stories listed in the syllabus. If you wish to write about a non-assigned work, you must ask your instructor first, and it must be approved in an email. Review the elements of literature and writing about literature lecture notes on Blackboard carefully.

You will need at least one secondary, scholarly source for your essay, such as a book or journal article. [GALILEO](#) is a great resource.

## Prompt

Write a thorough analysis of several (2-4) elements of fiction, explaining how they affect one another as well as the stories' theme and/or mood. You should also consider what the text says about what it means to be human (power structures, cultural anxieties, assumptions, ideologies, etc.). Remember that you must write about one or two of the stories assigned.

*Thesis:* Your thesis should focus on the literary elements you will analyze. Here is one way to structure the thesis to be sure you have a solid claim for your essay:

\_\_\_\_\_ 's work, titled \_\_\_\_\_, uses elements \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ to emphasize the theme of \_\_\_\_\_, which demonstrates \_\_\_\_\_.

Remember that all projects in this course focus on literary analysis, using the language of literary criticism (antagonist, tone, etc.). Be sure to review these terms in the sections covering Narrative and Plot, Character, Theme, Symbols, etc.

Your essay should not rely solely on personal opinion or mere summary. You should engage deeply with the overall conversation and your chosen text(s), which means that you should pose a claim about the text(s), use quotes from the text(s), and explore the quotes' significance for your overall argument. Focus on the "why" of your argument and not mere plot summary of a text. You cannot generate thoughtful claims if you rely simply on summary or opinion. While those opinions are important, you should use the text(s) to provide evidence for your essay.

Turn in this essay as instructed by your instructor.

## Requirements

Your essay should adhere to several requirements. This project will be graded using the essay rubric on Blackboard.

1. Your essay must be 4-5 pages.
  - a. Bottom of page 4 is the minimum.
  - b. Your works cited page is required, but does not count toward your page count.
2. You must write on the topic outlined in the assignment prompt.
3. Your essay must focus on the works we have studied in class.
4. You must format your essay to the current 8<sup>th</sup> edition of MLA.
5. Your essay must have at least 6 direct quotes or references to your text, integrated properly with correct citations.
6. You must use the elements of literature discussed in the course (setting, character, etc.).
7. Research is required for this essay; you must quote from at least one scholarly, peer-reviewed source, such as a book or journal article. You must correctly cite your research.
8. You must include a works cited page. You should have a minimum of 2 citations.

## Tips to Keep in Mind

- Choose a work that you find interesting. It's best if you understand the stories completely.
- Read the work carefully, making annotations and notes as you go. Look for elements to analyze. Break down scenes as necessary.
- Based on your stories, notes, ideas, and topic of your essay, draft a working thesis. Refer to the thesis statement lecture notes on Blackboard if you need help. Many examples you may find online are average, meaning they are C level thesis statements.
- Gather all your notes, any written assignments where you discussed this work, and any secondary research.
- Write an outline of the main points you want to make. Compare them to your thesis statement (modify your thesis or outline to make sure they match). Refer to the essay prompt to make sure you are still on track.
- Fill in the outline with support from the stories and from your research (remember the citations).
- Finalize your outline and submit your outline to the Outline 1 drop box.
- You should be able to start your rough draft of your essay. For greater potential for success, submit your essay to [UpSwing](#) for extra guidance. Feedback can take up to 48 hours. Use feedback from your instructor as well as from UpSwing to revise your draft.
- Finalize your essay and submit your essay to the Essay 1 drop box.