

Explication info

Explication: An explication paper is a detailed close reading -- or explanation -- of a passage or element prose. If writing about a short passage of prose, an explication allows for you to do an extremely detailed examination of a short piece of text, line by line, phrase by phrase, and word by word. Explication is also an excellent tool for demonstrating how a writer achieves a specific effect in the text, by looking closely at their use of craft (plot, character, point-of-view, structure, dialogue, detail, tone/voice, language, setting, etc.).

Organizing Tips: Perhaps the simplest way to organize a paper that uses explication is to move line by line through the text, tracing each word (and/or phrase) to identify how it furthers one or all elements of craft, explaining the significance of these patterns. In some cases, it might be useful to begin at the ending: start with an explication of the last few lines of the prose, and then move backwards through the poem to demonstrate how the author reached his/her conclusion/final lines. Other possible organizational strategies include looking at elements of craft by paragraph (i.e., your first paragraph might begin with a discussion of the author's use of imagery/detail, the next paragraph might move on to the author's use of point-of-view, tone, etc.). REMEMBER: above all, an explication is NOT a summary of the passage in question. Instead, use explication to deconstruct a text -- to show how the story works to achieve a certain effect and why.

12 point font, double spaced, with page numbers and your name and course number on the top of each page.