

ESSAY #2

For this assignment, you will write a comparative essay (of 500-800 words) on poetry you read in this course.

- This paper is worth 20% of your overall course grade.
- For this essay, you are asked to submit **three** documents:
 1. Your first draft
 2. The Smarthinking feedback
 3. Your final draft
- **Read the important information below regarding the assignment.** I encourage you to print these guidelines, read them thoroughly, and keep them for your reference as you are writing your paper.

Essay Structure and Content (Chapter 31, pages 1918-1937)

Your paper should be well organized and well developed, which means your ideas should be clearly presented and sufficiently supported. Essay structure is key. Refer to Chapter **31.1.5** (page 1926) for a mini-lesson on proper essay structure:

- Your essay should have a central point—or thesis statement—that is expressed in the introductory (first) paragraph (preferably at or near the end of it).
 - **NOTE:** The **thesis statement** is the most important sentence in your essay. It is the foundation upon which the rest of the essay is built. If your thesis statement is weak, the entire essay will suffer.
- The body paragraphs, comprising the bulk of your paper, are where you support your thesis:
 - Each body paragraph should have a topic sentence (at or near the beginning of the paragraph) expressing the main idea of that paragraph.
 - Each topic sentence should directly support your thesis.
 - Use the body paragraphs to provide specific details (such as character analyses, examples, illustrations, and so on) to provide evidence for your point(s).
- Conclude your essay with a paragraph in which you offer final thoughts; do not introduce new details in your closing paragraph.
- Please review Chapter 31, Section **31.2.1** for comparative essay structure (pages 1930-1934) because both prompts are comparative.
- Essay length should be 500-800 words.

Language

- Your writing should be college-level.
- Your **tone** should be academic, not conversational (avoid use of first-person and second-person pronouns)
- It should be free of errors in sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and word choice.
- The occasional error—one or two—is understandable.
- Any more than two errors will be considered flagrant disregard of the use of Standard English and will result in a deduction of points from your score.
- Your writing should be in the third person.
- When writing about literature, use the present tense. (eg, *Lola **runs** away from home*—not **ran** away.)

Formatting

As you know, following MLA guidelines is essential.

- Refer to **Chapters 30-35** in your textbook. Chapter 35, specifically, contains a sample literary analysis essay.
 - **NOTE:** You are not required to include secondary sources (scholarly criticism, historical information, etc), but if you do, your sources must documented appropriately.
- You will **incorporate quotations** from poems into your paper. Please review pages **1962-1991**. (Section **34.1.2**)
- You may also compare your finished paper with the sample MLA papers found here:
 - http://guides.skylinecollege.edu/ld.php?content_id=25062151
 - http://guides.skylinecollege.edu/ld.php?content_id=44584132
 - <https://style.mla.org/sample-papers/>

Some Common Errors: Beware!

Here are a few of the most common student errors. I will deduct points for the following:

- excessive plot summary (your paper should be *analysis*)
- formatting titles incorrectly
- misspelling words, including proper nouns
- improper capitalization

- using unacceptable secondary sources, such as Schmoops, BookRags, Wikipedia, SparkNotes, popular magazines, newspapers
- improper use of quotations, such as dropped-in quotes (lines from the text that stand alone as sentences in your essay)
- ending a paragraph with a quotation (remember: the sentences following the quotation should always explain its significance)
- excessive use of quotations. The use of more than three quotations per paragraph is considered excessive. (Your paper should be just that—**yours**. The essay should be your ideas written in your own words. Incorporate quotations from the poetry—and any secondary sources, if you use them—when necessary to support your points.)
- improper formatting of in-text citations
- improper use/placement of parentheses, quotation marks, periods
- general formatting errors (involving font, line spacing, header, indentation)
- improper formatting of Works Cited page
- language errors (fragments, run-ons, comma-splices, verb problems)

Rubric

- A detailed scoring rubric is available for your review by clicking the dropbox for Essay 2.
- The rubric is divided into several categories (including a category for your use of **Smarthinking** feedback).
- Make sure you review the rubric so that you can see how your paper will be evaluated.