

# Literary Analysis Essay 1 Directions and Topic Suggestions

**Due Date: September 29, 2019**

Write a literary analysis essay on either “Barn Burning” by William Faulkner or “Sonny’s Blues” by James Baldwin. First, after deciding which story you want to write about, choose a literary term, such as plot or characterization, to focus on in your paper and then develop a thesis that indicates the point you want to make about the term in relation to the story. Basically, you are arguing how the story should be understood or read by analyzing and explaining the deeper meaning behind what is presented on the surface of the story. (Topic suggestions are provided below.) Make sure you include quotes, paraphrases, and summaries from the story to help develop your point. Properly document those sources with in-text citations and a work cited page. **However, do not include any outside sources in this paper. You must rely solely upon the story you have chosen and your analysis of it in the essay.** Use your notes from the sections Writing an Analysis as well as Quoting, Paraphrasing, and Summarizing within MindTap Lit. 2.0 as a guide. You can find additional information about and an examples of literary analysis essays under External Links and Course Documents. (Please note that the format requirements that my prior students had to follow may have been different from what you are expected to do. Rather than look at the format, focus on the content, in other words how the student is analyzing the short story he or she chose to write about. Follow the format guidelines below for your essays.)

## *Topic Suggestions*

For your first literary analysis essay, you have a choice of topics that I have provided below, or you can choose your own as long as you follow the topic guidelines that are given.

Possible Topics:

1. What are the conflicts in “Barn Burning,” and how do they lead to the climax? How does the opening courtroom scene establish the many conflicts in the story?
2. In “Barn Burning,” what does Sarty think about his father? How does his thinking change and lead to his final decision?
3. What is the difference between the community’s definition of justice and the family’s definition in “Barn Burning”?
4. In “Sonny’s Blues,” what are the conflicts, and explain how they lead to the climax.
5. In “Sonny’s Blues,” compare and contrast the narrator to his brother, Sonny.

Topic Guidelines: If you choose your own topic, you must write about “Barn Burning” or “Sonny’s Blues” and focus on either the short story’s plot or character/characterization for the first literary analysis essay. You can also choose both of these two short stories and compare/contrast their plot or character/characterization.

### *Format Guidelines*

Your essay must be computer generated. Do not include a title page. On the first page of your essay, an inch from the top of the page, you should type your name, my name, course name, section number, and the date in the left-hand corner. The title should appear right below this information, and your essay should begin right below the title. While you should center your title, the text of your essay should be set to the left of your page, not right aligned, justified, or centered. Your entire essay should be double spaced, including the information in the top left-hand corner. (Rather than hitting the enter key twice to create double spacing, please use the tools provided by your program to make your essay double spaced. For example, in Microsoft Word 2007 or a later version of the program, in the home tab, look at the section labeled “Paragraph” to set your document to double space.) Besides the space caused by your double spacing the entire essay, do not include extra space after the information in the top left-hand corner, between your title and your essay, and between your paragraphs. (To ensure that Microsoft Word does not add extra space whenever you hit the enter key, select or highlight your entire essay, click on the spacing tab in the section labeled “Paragraph” on the home tab, and click Remove Space Before and After Paragraph if these options appear. If they do not, your essay is probably spaced correctly.) Your last name and the page number should appear a half inch from the top of the page in the top right-hand corner of each page, even the first page. (You can accomplish this by using the Header and Insert options in your word processing program.) All four margins should be one inch wide. You are required to use Times New Roman and 12 pt. font for all of your writing assignments. If you do not follow these guidelines, you will lose points towards your grade.

Your essay must be 2-4 pages long (no shorter than 2 full pages and no longer than 4 full pages, not including the work cited page). If your essay does not meet the minimum page requirement, your grade will be lowered based upon how short your essay is. For instance, if your essay is half a page short, it will be lowered half a grade. If it is one page short, it will be lowered one letter grade. (Make sure you save your essay done on a computer on a flash drive or in a cloud, such as Google Drive.)

### *Prior Students*

**If you have taken my course during an earlier semester, you must write and submit a new essay on different topics rather than resubmitting the same essay or a version of it that you have turned in previously to me. If you do not follow all of these directions, you will receive a zero for the assignment and will not be able to make any revisions to it to receive a grade. Therefore, if you have any questions, please let me know.**