

Write a critical essay examining a theme as it is revealed in two of the following works: “rihannaboi95” by Jordan Tannahill, “Horses of the Night” by Margaret Laurence, “Simple Recipes” by Madeleine Thien.

Key considerations:

- Each play / story we studied explored multiple ideas and themes. You can frequently state a theme in big, broad terms: love, courage, family, identity... **You are to explain what each work you choose reveals about the chosen theme.**
- Remember that you are writing your explanation of a theme in a **formal essay**. You are not writing a list or telling a story. You are to use formal language and sentence structure and avoid slang or colloquial language.
- To ‘essay’ means to try, to attempt so... you have to attempt to express and explain something about a theme. What is the **thesis**, the main idea, you are explaining to the reader? i.e. If both works deal with the theme of family, what does they say about family? What do you feel the authors reveal about the theme throughout the story? How is that idea revealed? Through characters? Events? Dialogue? A *critical* essay requires *critical* thought.
- The theme does not have to be expressed exactly the same in each work. You may compare and contrast the theme and how the text reveals that theme.
- Of course, the next key is to support your opinion and prove that you have thought about and organized your ideas. Do not merely summarize the events of the story.
- Support is usually in the form of quotations, paraphrases, or examples from the texts. (This is how you prove the explanation of your theme to be valid.)
- You are striving to prove the validity of your opinion regarding the theme, but you do not have to say, “In my opinion...”. Just state your opinion and then support it.
- The essay should be 800 – 1000 words in length.

Student Learning Goals to be demonstrated through this assignment:

- Write a **coherent**, sufficiently developed paper on a literary subject
- Read carefully with attention to both **form** and **content**
- **Think critically** about printed ... materials
- **Analyze** and explain various forms of literature
- Use correct **sentence structure** and other **grammatical forms**

Grading

N.B. This assignment is worth a total of 15% of your final mark. Your grade is determined according to the following rubric:

A – The paper is clearly organized with a strong, articulated thesis. Thoughts are sufficiently developed and clearly and logically connected. Ideas are consistently supported with specific details, quotations, and / or paraphrases from the text(s). There is a detailed analysis of the theme and story. The relative lack of errors in spelling, grammar, and sentence structure is impressive, especially considering the complexity and variety of the author’s writing choices. The author’s writing choices are suitable for the intended audience. The combination of thoughts, style, support, and organization result in an authoritative, coherent expression of the author’s thesis. Citations and “Works Cited” page are complete and accurate.

B - The paper is well organized with a definite thesis. Thoughts are sufficiently developed and clearly and logically connected. Ideas are usually supported with specific details, quotations, and / or paraphrases from the text(s). The content contains analysis of the theme and story. There are few errors in spelling, grammar, and sentence structure and they rarely interfere with the author’s communication. The author makes a variety of effective and suitable writing choices. The combination of thoughts, style, support, and organization result in a clear, coherent expression of the author’s thesis. Citations and “Works Cited” page are complete and accurate.

C - The paper is generally organized and contains a thesis statement. Thoughts are developed and generally connected and are often supported with details, quotations, and / or paraphrases from the text(s). The author sometimes summarizes rather than analyses the theme and story. Some minor content may be inaccurate. There are some significant errors in spelling, grammar, and sentence structure which, at times, interfere with the author’s communication. The author makes some effective and suitable writing choices, but language and sentence structure are usually simplistic and / or word choice is sometimes inaccurate. The combination of thoughts, style, support, and organization communicate a general expression of the author’s thesis. Citations and “Works Cited” page are included but may have some errors.

D - The paper has gaps in organization and / or lacks a strong thesis statement. Thoughts are not always developed and / or connected logically. Ideas are inconsistently supported with details, quotations, and / or paraphrases from the text(s). Much of the content leans towards summary and some content may be inaccurate. There are significant errors in spelling, grammar, and sentence structure which interfere with the author’s communication. The author makes few effective writing choices, and / or choices are not suitable for the audience. The combination of thoughts, style, support, and organization communicate the author’s ideas in a vague manner. Citations and “Works Cited” page are incomplete and / or inaccurate.

F - The paper lacks organization and / or a thesis statement. Ideas are rarely developed or supported with details, quotations, and / or paraphrases from the text(s). The content is a summary of the story or a series of unclear, inaccurate, or unrelated statements. There are frequent, significant errors in spelling, grammar, and sentence structure and those errors severely impede the author’s communication. Writing choices are ineffective and / or unsuitable for the audience. The combination of thoughts, style, support, and organization do not communicate clearly. Citations and “Works Cited” page are incomplete and / or missing.