

Essay 1: The Literary Analysis

Purpose:

While some might be familiar with the act of literary analysis, for most its purpose is not always clear. Here, as with any literary analysis essay, our purpose is to carefully examine a work of literature or an aspect of a work of literature with the intention of, ultimately, finding a certain “value” or “meaning” behind the text. As with any analysis, this requires you to break the subject down into its component parts to uncover patterns, themes, and other points of significance that speak to a larger conversation(s). Analysis of any kind is not a means to an end but, rather, a process to deeper appreciation and understanding of a subject/text.

Prompt:

For this particular essay, you will consider the following questions: 1) what type of value is placed on food in this text and 2) how does the text utilize food as a means to address different (and potentially more significant) issues for characters in the text/the reader/the world beyond the text? Your essay should not directly answer this question but, rather, use it as a jumping off point for your own unique argument and subsequent analysis. Once you’ve determined your specific argument, keep the following questions in mind as you work through your analysis: Is food absent or present in this work? How is food described? Does food play a central role in this work, or is it simply part of the landscape? Does this work involve specific dishes/food items, a food ritual, or experience related to food/eating? Additionally, don’t forget to address the follow-up questions that are *essential* for a productive analysis (What? Why? How? So What?). You will **choose one of the following texts** to discuss in your essay: *The Particular Sadness of Lemon Cake*, “Interpreter of Maladies,” or “Persimmons.”

Spotlight: Since this is our first essay, the spotlight will be on every essay’s essential piece: **the thesis statement**. We will work on this piece of the essay together as a class.

While I expect and encourage you to produce a unique argument and stay true to your voice as a writer, your literary analysis must do/include the following:

1. Be written in MLA Format (12 point, Times New Roman, double-spaced, 1 inch margins, Works Cited page, etc.). **Ask** if you have any questions about this.
2. Have a unique title that indicates the subject of your analysis and the direction of your argument (“Essay 1,” “Literary Analysis,” “[Title of Work],” etc. are not appropriate).
3. Have a strong introduction that 1) identifies your chosen text and the particular elements you’re interested in/will be focusing on and 2) presents a clear, specific, and unique argument in your thesis statement.
4. Have *at least* 3 body paragraphs that utilize elements of your chosen text and present thoughtful, well-developed analysis.
5. Have a conclusion that not only “sums up” your paper, but also provides thoughtful insight for your reader to take away from your analysis.

Length: 5 *full* pages (not including Works Cited).

Due Date: Sunday, 2/16 by 11:59 PM. All essays are submitted via Canvas.