

# Literary Analysis Essay

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Title of text:

Author:

Use the chart below to analyze key elements of the text and brainstorm ideas you could develop into a thesis. Jot down the first thoughts that come to mind as you read the guiding questions.

<p><b>Characters:</b> How do the main characters change over time? How do these changes affect the story or the reader?</p>	
<p><b>Setting:</b> When and where does the novel take place? How does the setting affect the characters or plot?</p>	
<p><b>Plot:</b> What is the main conflict of the story? How is it resolved? What do the characters or the reader learn from the conflict?</p>	
<p><b>Theme:</b> What big ideas or messages about life does the novel suggest? How does the author reveal these themes?</p>	
<p><b>Point of View:</b> Who is the novel's narrator? Is the reader aware of anything characters are not, and how does having this perspective affect the reader?</p>	
<p><b>Word Choice:</b> Does the author make any interesting word choices or use any figurative language? How does word choice affect the reader?</p>	
<p><b>Symbols:</b> Do any objects show up repeatedly throughout the novel? Do any objects seem to represent an idea or have a larger meaning?</p>	
<p><b>Text Structure:</b> Does the author make interesting choices about chapter or sentence length? Is the story linear or does it jump around in time? How do these structure choices affect the story?</p>	

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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Use these cards to collect textual evidence to support your thesis. Each of these evidence cards can be used to build out your body paragraphs.

### Evidence Card

What is this evidence about? (circle one):

- characters
- setting
- plot
- theme
- point of view
- word choice
- symbols
- text structure
- other: \_\_\_\_\_

Evidence (quote, paraphrase, or detail): \_\_\_\_\_ Page Number: \_\_\_\_\_

When in the story does this evidence occur? (e.g., What else is happening?)

Who is speaking and why?

What effect does this evidence have on the story or reader? (e.g., Does the evidence suggest a theme? Does it reveal new information to the reader?)

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**1. Analyze the prompt to make sure you understand the requirements of your task.**

Prompt:

- **Circle** key verbs. (For example, “explain,” “analyze,” or “describe.”)
- **Underline the part of the text** the prompt asks you to write about. (For example, does it ask about a specific character or event, or does it ask about the author’s word choice?)

**2. Come up with an idea for your thesis.**

- In the column on the left, write down all of the ideas that first come to mind when you think about the prompt.
- Find the parts of the text that gave you these ideas, and note these in the column on the right.

What ideas do I have in response to the prompt?	What moments, words, or details from the text gave me these ideas?

- Use your notes from the table above to write your **thesis**. Ask yourself: “Which idea in response to the prompt is best supported by the text?” In one sentence, sum up this interpretation as your thesis.

Thesis

**3. Double-check that your thesis responds to the prompt.** Does your thesis meet all of the requirements that you identified in step #1?

- If not, look back through your ideas to come up with another thesis.
- If yes, you are ready to brainstorm supporting ideas!

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Authors often reveal **themes**—big ideas or messages about life—through lessons their characters learn. To identify a theme of your text, list the lessons learned by the story's characters that stand out to you most.

Character(s)	Lesson Learned	Evidence	Page #
Example: Ponyboy from <i>The Outsiders</i> Example: Ponyboy from <i>The Outsiders</i>	Ponyboy learns that Darry's harsh treatment is a sign of concern and love, not hate. Ponyboy realizes that Cherry is not so different from himself.	"Darry did care about me... When he yelled 'Pony, where have you been all this time?' he meant 'Pony, you've scared me to death.'" "Maybe the two different worlds we live in weren't so different. We saw the same sunset."	p. 98 p. 41

Look over your notes in the table above. Do any particular lessons about life or humanity stand out or repeat? Write down the **theme** that interests you most.

Example: Judgments based on assumptions are not always true.

### Theme

Next, use your theme to come up with your **thesis**, or the interpretation of the text that you will develop in your essay.

Try using this sentence frame:            [What I notice in the text that leads to the lesson learned]            suggest(s) that            [theme]           .

Example: Ponyboy's relationships in *The Outsiders* suggest that judgments based on assumptions are often mistaken.

### Thesis

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Thesis Statement:**

1. List as much evidence (quotes, paraphrases, or specific details from the text) as you can to support your thesis.

Quote, Paraphrase, or Detail	Page #	How does this evidence support my thesis?

2. Look over the evidence you've listed. Does it fall into any major categories? Group together any pieces of evidence that are related.

3. For each group of related evidence, ask yourself: "Together, how do these pieces of evidence support my thesis?" Sum up the idea in a single sentence. These will be your topic sentences, or **supporting ideas**, for your thesis.

**Supporting Idea:**

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Date \_\_\_\_\_

Outline your literary analysis essay by filling in your **thesis** (interpretation of the text) and at least two **topic sentences** (supporting ideas) to show why your thesis is true. Then, add **evidence** (quotes, paraphrases, or specific details from the text) to support each topic sentence.

