Formal Literary Essays

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| The PurposeTo present a thought-provoking, original idea to your reader that can be argued againstTo convince your reader that you are right by supporting it with convincing, and revealing quotationsTo clearly convey your ideas by linking everything back to your thesis using | StyleFormal – no you, I, we, us…, no slang or colloquial termsAcademic – elevated diction (thesaurus is your friend, but use it correctly)Never state “this essay will prove…” or “this proves the thesis because…” – too obvious and weaken your argumentVery argumentative 🡪 strong language and get rid of anything that sounds like you’re downplaying something or doubting it |

## 5 Components of a Successful Essay

1. **Argumentative thesis statement** – sets up your entire essay- everything needs to come back to this – you need something to PROVE
2. **Good examples from the text** – choose examples that *prove* something, not that just demonstrate it happened
3. **Clear explanation of your proof** – don’t assume your reader will make the connections, make them *for* them – explain what your proof has demonstrated and say something *interesting* about it that not everyone would have thought of – ALWAYS include an argumentative word (proving, indicating, demonstrating…) AND key words from your thesis
4. **Insightful introduction**—make it about more than just the book- begin by looking at the issue as a whole, then bring it back to the book
5. **Thought**-**provoking conclusion**—don’t drop the ball at the end, leave your reader with something to think about that really drives home your point

## Structure

**Intro**  - begins broad and general and gets more specific

**Hook** – very broad introduction to your topic – 1-3 sentences

* + Do not mention title or author yet, just get the reader thinking about your topic
  + Keep it academic and formal – not too imaginative

**Introduce text** – include title and author and link it to your hook – 1-3 sentences

**Thesis and direction** – get very specific here and state what your main argument is and how you’re going to prove it (argument and direction)

**Body** – 3 paragraphs all proving a different aspectof your thesis – each is a properly structured paragraph:

**Topic Sentence** – introduces one of your 3 points from your thesis

* + Use similar words to the ones used in the thesis

Transition - **Point 1** – introduce the point – 1 sentence

**Proof 1** – integrate a quotation or specific piece of evidence into your own sentence

* + Provide enough background information to make the integration smooth, but assume your reader has read the book

**Explanation** – explain how your proof proves your thesis/topic sentence –

* Use key words from your thesis AND argumentative words (proving, indicating, demonstrating…)

Transition – Point 2 – Proof 2 – Explanation 2

Transition – Point 3 – Proof 3 – Explanation 3

Transition – **Concluding sentence –** link all 3 of your points back to your thesis statement

* + brief summary/list of points
  + use key words from the thesis statement and an argumentative word(proving, indication, illustrating, demonstrating…) to link it back completely

**Conclusion** – begins very specific with 3 points and thesis and gets broader and more general

Transitional - restate your thesis statement (same idea, but different words)

Restate your points (what your body paragraphs were about)

**Closing statement** – leave your reader something to think about