

Close Reading Essay

In this assignment, you will write an essay that examines memory, narrative, and history in any of the texts that we've read so far this semester. Choose a text that most interests you and develop an argument about how memory, narrative style, and history interact. I would even encourage you to focus on a single poem or short story as the close reading aspect of this essay will be easier. For this essay, you will use at least one of the "Memory Secondary Readings" from earlier in the semester to define your terms and give context in a framework paragraph. You will then use these ideas to perform a close reading on the language of the novel that you picked.

As you review the novel, concentrate on the elements of the story that bring the narrative to life: plot/structure, setting, characterization, narration/point of view/voice, dialogue, tone and irony, symbolism or allegory (what do certain people or objects symbolize in the piece?). After reviewing the novel carefully, choose the specific details that you would like to focus on and then begin to develop your essay.

You must draw upon the larger themes of the course to enhance your argument about the novel. Be sure to choose specific quotations from the novel that you will analyze in detail; however, the bulk of the paper should not be long block quotes. You want to be selective and only include detailed text that you will analyze in depth from the language to how it fits in with the larger themes of the novel. These quotations must be integrated according to the guidelines that we will discuss in class. You must also provide a Works Cited page.

In the final draft of your essay, you must provide the following:

- An introductory paragraph with a clear thesis about the novel and what it ultimately suggests about history, memory, and narrative.
- A framework paragraph that defines your terms using the "Secondary Memory Readings" for the course.
- Body paragraphs with quotations from the novel and detailed analysis of those quotations.
- A brief concluding paragraph that puts the novel into a broader context.

Evaluation:

- ✓ Is there a clear argument, which is clearly stated through a thesis statement?
- ✓ Does each paragraph have a central point, which is supported by specific evidence from the story?
- ✓ Does each paragraph's central point go to supporting your overall argument and thesis statement for your paper?
- ✓ Is there a strong opening and closing?
- ✓ Is a Works Cited page included in MLA format?
- ✓ Is there proper MLA format for both in-text citations and the Works Cited page?
- ✓ Does the paper meet the minimum requirements of the assignment?
- ✓ Are proper grammar, punctuation, spelling, and organization conventions observed?

Length: 4-5 pages, excluding Works Cited, 12 pt. Times New Roman, 1" margins