

Research Paper Overview

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The final goal of this project is to produce a well-written research paper based on a critical literary analysis which will:

- Demonstrate the ability to use the writing process to complete a critical assignment.
- Demonstrate the ability to analyze an audience and select an appropriate written communication style. (No personal voice.)
- Prepare a research paper, demonstrating the ability to use a variety of sources.
- Synthesize information from a variety of sources into a new document.
- Analyze the selected stories, do not review, nor summarize the plots.

SECTIONS

01. Gather preliminary resources and construct paper throughout weeks 10-13.
02. Formally declare a topic and thesis statement. < *due 10.29.10*
03. Generate draft of approximately 300 words during week 12.
04. Generate in-depth analysis of research during weeks 13-14.
05. Present ten page document: digital and print versions. < *due 12.03.10*

SOURCES

- 5 academic journals (from school database)
- 3 books from school library and outside reading

DOCUMENT REQUIREMENTS

- Ten full pages, *plus* an additional work cited page.
- Entire paper is double spaced, following MLA standard template

final project

THESIS POSSIBILITIES

Below are sample thesis paper topics. Choose one as a focus for your paper, manipulating the observations to suit your purposes. *Utilize critical analysis to support your observations.*

1. Analyze the victims in the following stories:

Antigone in the Sophocles play and Jane in “The Yellow Wallpaper.”

Each character is placed in similar situations of passivity with widely-differing results. Form an opinion regarding the various actions and motivations of the female characters. How are they being controlled by the male authority figures?

2. Analyze Nathaniel Hawthorne’s character Beatrice in “Rappaccini’s Daughter”

with James Joyce’s protagonist in “Eveline.” What similar or dissimilar techniques do the authors use to motivate their female protagonists?

Form an opinion regarding the passive actions and motivations of the main characters in conjunction with their fathers.

3. Analyze Ray Bradbury’s “The October Game” with E. Poe’s “The Black Cat.”

Consider how Bradbury successfully mirrors Gothic techniques for his own modern protagonist. Consider Poe’s primary goal in the story: is he seeking to generate a Gothic tale or focus on the psychological development of the narrator?

Form an opinion regarding the actions and motivations of the narrators.

(Talk to me prior to selecting this topic.)

4. Free-for-all: Compose your own thesis statement regarding character actions and motivations from two of the following authors.

(You must include an additional outside short story reading for one source, plus use a story discussed in class. *Talk to me prior to selecting this topic.*)

E.A. Poe

Ray Bradbury

Charlotte Gillman

William Faulkner

Richard Wright

James Joyce

Nathaniel Hawthorne

CHECKLIST FOR ANALYSIS PAPERS:

*Quote evidence from the primary text to defend your answers to these questions.
Explain the quote or interpret the quote.
Never end a paragraph with a quotation.*

Who is the protagonist?

Is the protagonist a stereotypical hero?
Is the protagonist an anti-hero?
Is the protagonist a tragic hero?
How does the character transform?
Does the protagonist gain an epiphany moment?

Who is the antagonist?

What type of character is the protagonist/antagonist?
flat
round
dynamic
static

Why does the author present the characters in the manner depicted?

Do the characters represent a larger group of individuals?

What is the conflict type represented?

What is the specific conflict shown?
What is a possible secondary conflict shown?
How does the conflict contribute to the theme?

Who do the characters resemble?

Are the characters archetypes?
Have you seen a similar plot somewhere else? (Intertextuality)
Bible
Greek/Roman myth
Fairy Tale plot
Shakespeare plot
How is the character motivated to act?
How does the character react?
How does the character speak to other characters?
How do other characters speak to him/her?

Do symbols exist in the text? (—sex, death, love)

religious-spiritual love
fertility-erotic love
love of a partner
friendship-platonic love
death

Is the story an analogy making a commentary about modern times?

Does the story portray a quest theme?

- physical
- spiritual
- psychological

What type of narration is used?

Do you trust the narration?

How are scenes presented to the reader?

- How is the setting presented?
- Could the setting represent one of the characters?
- What mood is the setting promoting?
- What tone does the author/narrator use?

What figurative language is being used in the story?

- Is there any ironic elements used in the story?
- Is there a foreshadowing moment in the opening?

How does the plot fit easily into Freytag's Pyramid?

- How strong of an exposition is used?
- What is the specific inciting moment?
- What is the climatic moment?
- What is the epiphany moment?

What type of technique is the author using?

- Is there any psychological experiments in the text?
- Is there any creative experiments in the text?

What is a possible reason for the author wanting to tell this story?

- Are there hidden meanings in the text?
 - political statement
 - religious or moral judgement
 - social commentary
- If none of these elements exist, *why not?*

What is the main point of the story?

- What is the story's theme?
- Is the story successful?

What are critics saying:

- about the story?
- about the author's technique?
- about the author's style?
- about the elements?
- about the characters?
- about the characters' motivations?
- about the characters' symbolism?