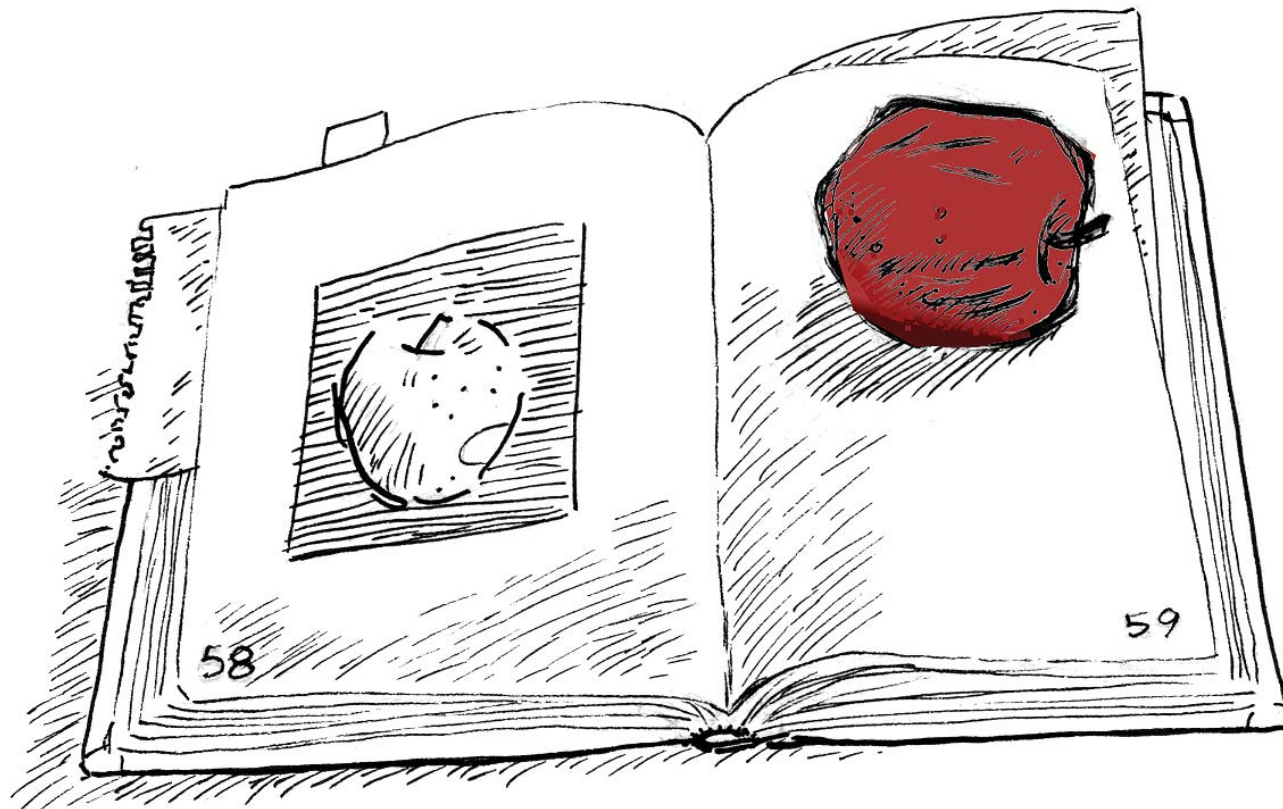


Basic Construction of Literary Analysis



Basic Construction of Lit. Crit. Paper

Introductory Paragraph

Typically the introduction paragraph should consist of five or more sentences.

Topic Sentence: Shows analysis of chosen key words: sanity, perception, *etc.*

(See handout for Assignment 1.)

Secondary Evidence Sentence (SES) 1

SES 2

SES 3

Thesis: Declaration / State observation of the two stories chosen for analysis

Basic Construction of Lit. Crit. Paper

Example Introduction Paragraph:

Identity is important to an individual. It maintains one's status in a community and keeps the average person operating within the restrictions of a culture. Without a sense of identity, a structure to follow, or cultural rules, an individual may withdraw from society or worse fall into a severe mental lapse. Two examples from literature are the Chambermaid from the Grimm Brothers' "The Goose Girl" and the Unnamed Narrator from Edgar Allan Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart." Both of these characters are depicted with violent tendencies against people of higher class and at the same time show ever-increasing levels of insanity.

Basic Construction of Lit. Crit. Paper

Example Introduction Paragraph:

Identity is important to an individual.

< key word shows theme for full paper

It maintains one's status in a community and keeps the average person operating within the restrictions of a culture.

< personal definition of key word

Without a sense of identity, a structure to follow, or cultural rules, an individual may withdraw from society or worse fall into a severe mental lapse.

< secondary commentary of key word/ theme

Two examples from literature are the Chambermaid from the Grimm Brothers' "The Goose Girl" and the Unnamed Narrator from Edgar Allan Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart."

< topic declared / thesis part 1

Both of these characters are depicted with violent tendencies against people of higher class and at the same time show ever-increasing levels of insanity.

< topic declared / thesis part 2

Basic Construction of Lit. Crit. Paper

Do not quote the dictionary.

- This is considered a cliché.
- Never show quotes, nor paraphrases, in an introduction or concluding paragraph.

However, you **can consult** a dictionary and then **interpret** the key word according to your own observations.

Basic Construction of Lit. Crit. Paper

By providing your analysis of supplied material, and *by using signal phrases*, the instructor knows you are not basing your observations simply on material “borrowed” from a random web site.

- Avoid the “cut-and-paste” method of creating a paper.
- Synopsis sites are fine for gathering ideas to approach, but do not use them for research material.
- Your observations are more important in an analysis.

Basic Construction of Lit. Crit. Paper

Body Paragraphs

Typically body paragraphs consist of five or more sentences, just like the introductory paragraph.

Topic Sentence: Introduces new observation regarding thesis statement

SES: Clarifies new observation

Defense: Signal, then state example of defense: quote or paraphrase

Explain: Confirm / Interpret findings / Explain why quote is important
(This section alone may require three, or more, sentences.)

Conclusion Sentence: End with major point regarding topic sentence;
wrap up subject

Topic Sentences and Secondary Evidence Sentences consist of the student's observation on the subject of discussion.

A Defense Sentence consists of a quote or paraphrase from either a primary source OR a secondary critical source.

Basic Construction of Lit. Crit. Paper

Example Paragraph:

The Unnamed Narrator is clearly insane and is shown without any true sense of identity. As his story progresses, his confession becomes more and more emotional. He feels lost and without true purpose, nor seems to have a full understanding of his own identity. For example, near the close of the story he states: “Yet the sound increased —and what could I do? It was a low, dull, quick sound —much such a sound as a watch makes when enveloped in cotton. I gasped for breath” (306). Poe begins utilizing italic phrases to show emphasis of the emotional state of his narrator. Likewise, his erratic physical actions begin to mirror his erratic tones of voice. What is interesting, with each progressive paragraph, the character appears more emotional and more upset; he becomes desperate to prove how sane he should be perceived despite his reactions to unfolding events, if only to himself.

Basic Construction of Lit. Crit. Paper

Example Paragraph:

The Unnamed Narrator is clearly insane and is shown without true sense of identity.

< secondary observation for key word choice

As his story progresses, his confession becomes more and more emotional. He feels lost and without true purpose, nor seems to have a full understanding of his own identity.

< clarifies observation with example from text

< prepares reader for quote or paraphrase

For example, near the close of the story he states: “Yet the sound increased —and what could I do? It was a low, dull, quick sound —much such a sound as a watch makes when enveloped in cotton. I gasped for breath” (306).

< signal phrase alerts reader to evidence

< quote defends chosen topic

Poe begins utilizing italic phrases to show emphasis of the emotional state of his narrator. Likewise, his erratic physical actions begin to mirror his erratic tones of voice.

< an explanation of the quote is provided

What is interesting, with each progressive paragraph, the character appears more emotional and more upset; he becomes desperate to prove how sane he should be perceived despite his reactions to unfolding events, if only to himself.

< closure is provided; reader is prepared for a new topic

Basic Construction of Lit. Crit. Paper

Conclusion Paragraph

Topic Sentence: Sums up your analysis and provides closure to your paper.

- Ultimately, what is revealed to you regarding the chosen theme?
- What do your observations reveal about the two characters?
- What do your observations reveal about the stories' plots?
- What do your observations reveal about the authors' intentions?

Do not repeat topic sentences word-for-word;

do sum up your ideas based on your selected topics.