

Critical Analysis Essays: Expectations

Be sure to consult your copy of *A Writer's Reference* from English 1301 for any documentation or research questions.

ITEMS OF IMPORTANCE

1. Be sure to use signal phrases and proper in-text notes. In this assignment's case, the *names of authors are less important* to mention in parenthetical notations. *Page numbers are more important*. See appropriate models for book entries in *A Writer's Reference* on pages 382-385.

example (signal phrase is underlined):

In the fairy tale "Godfather Death," the Grimm Brothers establish a personified figure of death, who is often described with human features. He is shown walking "with withered legs" (209).

2. When quoting dialogue, be sure to punctuate details correctly.

example:

The Grimm Brothers show the mother-figure giving her daughter a bloody cloth: "The old queen said, 'Dear child, preserve this carefully, it will be of service to you on your way' " (405).

3. If quoting more than four lines of text in your paper, use an indented block quote. *See examples on page 382 in AWR.*
4. All work cited entries must follow proper MLA guidelines, alpha-order by last name of author.

example:

Smith, Robert and Dr. Jean Warhol Smith. "Complexities." *The Complete Story*. Ed. James Stern. New York: Random House, 1972. Print.

Critical Analysis Essays: Expectations

A portion of literary analysis requires the critic to break down components of elements which exist in a story or historical document. Some of these issues include:

- characterization of protagonist or antagonist
- relationships between protagonist and antagonist
- types of conflict
- symbolisms of major images
- types of narration / reliability of narrator

I. For reference materials select a Literary or Historical Critical Analysis from the on-line Library Database (*for ex:* Academic Search Complete).

- Geoffrey Chaucer and “The Wife of Bath’s Prologue”
- William Shakespeare and *The Tempest*
- Bede and *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*
- Aphra Behn

A. Do not select material which states the article is a *review* or an *overview* of plot synopsis.

B. Do not select *basic biographical* articles on the author.

C. Do not select material which simply reviews a historical figure’s life.

II. Research Objectives

1. *Confirm subject matter and comprehension of material.*
2. Always read the full chosen article, highlighting key phrases and points discussed by the critic or historian.
3. In your papers briefly embellish your paragraphs with the following:
 - Introduce the critic by full name and applicable title (editor, author, historian)
 - Explain the author’s main points and show his/her major defenses.
 - State what evidence is used as defense; label as primary or secondary resources.
(In other words: sum up the basic idea of article.)
 - What does the author resolve in the conclusion of his/her piece?
 - Based on your own reading of the material, do you agree/disagree with the opinions expressed in the essay?
 - Be sure to show proper citation of quoted/paraphrased material.
4. **Most importantly**, your observations are key to critical papers; as a critic you are synthesizing researched information *with* your opinions.