

Captain Kopacz
American Literature: Author and Text
WRITING YOUR ANALYTICAL PAPER

A study of the author's life and the implications that it had in novels

I. First Step

a. When you are trying to decide what to write about:

Formulate a CLEAR argument; the entire paper should support and develop this idea. An argument or a thesis statement is your particular "take" on a specific topic. For example, a **topic** might be "the child narrator in *The Bluest Eye* and *When I Was Puerto Rican*" and an **argument** might be "the point of view of the child protagonist serves as an incisive way to point out the life of the author and his beliefs of the inconsistencies of the societal logic of the world they live in." Once you have developed an **interesting, coherent, and original** argument, carefully decide which elements of the text(s) will serve as evidence for your paper. Remember that you should be incorporating ideas from this course, but the paper should not reiterate class materials.

II. Suggestions for organizing your paper

a. Try to organize your paper thematically and use each text as a way to elaborate on your argument looking at **differences and similarities** between the texts, and the author's intent to incorporate his/her life. Do not discuss the texts sequentially so that your paper reads like a list in which the first part of your paper addresses Book One and the second part discusses Book Two. E.G., if you discuss the place of minorities in the World War Two era in the United States as presented in *No No Boy* and *The Bluest Eye*, ensure that you weave your discussion of both texts into your analysis.

b. When quoting from text, follow these guidelines. Quotations of five lines or more should be kept to a minimum. This tends to be an easy way to "fill" space but it is also the oldest trick in the book! In such cases, **set your quotation off in an indented block**. For quoted text that is less than five lines, integrate your quotation into your paper in the following way, "your quotation goes here" (author *text* page number).

*****NOTE: You do not have to include the name of the author or the text **unless it is not clear** in the context of your paper. **PLEASE NOTE THAT YOU SHOULD NEVER QUOTE TEXT WITHOUT DISCUSSING IT: QUOTATIONS DO NOT STAND ALONE; OR IN PLACE OF ANALYSIS; THEY SERVE TO ILLUSTRATE A POINT EFFECTIVELY, AND INTELLIGENTLY.**

III. In addition, make sure to include the following:

a. An introductory paragraph in which you present your **argument** clearly and concisely. Do not include supporting argument here: simply state what you will show and how you will do this and what text you are including. Remember: this is your opportunity to ensure that your reader will be interested by your ideas.

b. Several paragraphs in which you present and expand upon the ideas in your introduction. Create smooth transitions between paragraphs and always make sure that it links to your initial **argument**.

c. A conclusion in which you attempt to draw your ideas together. **DO NOT** merely reiterate your argument. Rather think of ways that your argument opens up other questions or ideas.

IV. Remember to:

- _xa. Give your paper a title. Be creative! Not only is a title such as "An Author's Life Being Compared in *The Bluest Eye* and *Fire* boring, but given that I am not endowed with telepathic powers and am not psychically connected with you, I will not know what you are writing about when I read your paper if you don't include a title.
- _xb. **Keep plot summation to an absolute minimum.** I have read the books, and I know you have. Use your space to analyze the texts.
- _xc. *Italicize or underline titles of novels and films. Titles of short stories such as "Eye Contact" are placed between quotation marks.*
- _xd. Put your name and my name on your paper.
- _xd. Include a bibliography. For novels, use the following format:
Rushdie, Salman. *Shame*. London: Picador, 1983.
- _xe. For more specific information, consult Diana Hacker's *A Writer's Reference* or the *MLA Handbook For Writers of Research Papers*.
- _xe. **You must save a copy of your paper either as a photocopy or on disk to safeguard against potential loss, damage, theft or destruction of your paper.**
- _xf. Use the following font. Times 12 point is required. Double space your papers, with 1 inch margins. Cursive writing is allowed when computer is unavailable. If you lose the typed version, please make sure you have a written paper ready to be turned in as a replacement.
- _xg. Thoroughly proofread your paper for content, spelling mistakes, grammatical and syntactical error.

IT MUST ALSO BE STATED THAT PLAGIARISM IS A SERIOUS OFFENSE THAT CAN ADVERSELY AFFECT YOUR ACADEMIC STANDING AT THIS ACADEMY. PLEASE ATTRIBUTE ALL SOURCES ACCURATELY AND DO NOT SUBMIT WORK THAT IS NOT YOUR OWN.

Understanding instructions is an integral part of any assignment. Failure on your part to have read and understood the guidelines will not be considered a valid excuse for not following them.

The authors must be from our Unit of Study in American Literature, thus these are your only options for your essay:

N. Scott Momaday
Marco Polo
William Bradford
Olaudah Equiano
Maya Angelou
Anne Bradstreet
Arthur Miller
Thomas Jefferson
Benjamin Franklin
Martin Luther King, Jr.
Malco X
Ralph Waldo Emerson

Henry David Thoreau
Walt Whitman
William Carlos Williams
E.E. Cummings
Edgar Allan Poe
Washington Irving
Nathaniel Hawthorne
William Faulkner
Herman Melville
Stephen Crane
Mark Twain
Mohandas K. Gandhi

Due Dates:

I: Outline:

A. To include: topic sentences (thesis), supporting details using research materials. You may use sources from the computer but you must use the Sarasota County Student Portal on the computer. Do not use Yahoo, Google, Ask Jeeves, and or Dog pile as educated sites: Due November 21st

II. Note cards:

A. Students will write information using note cards about their critical analysis essay, also please use only one side of card; label in chronological order, etc. This is done before the rough copy is due. Due December 4th

III. Critical Analysis: Final Paper and Rough Copy due! Rough Copy must be included with the essay. Remember to have your back up printed paper or a written copy ready in case you lose the first one. Due: December: 11th.